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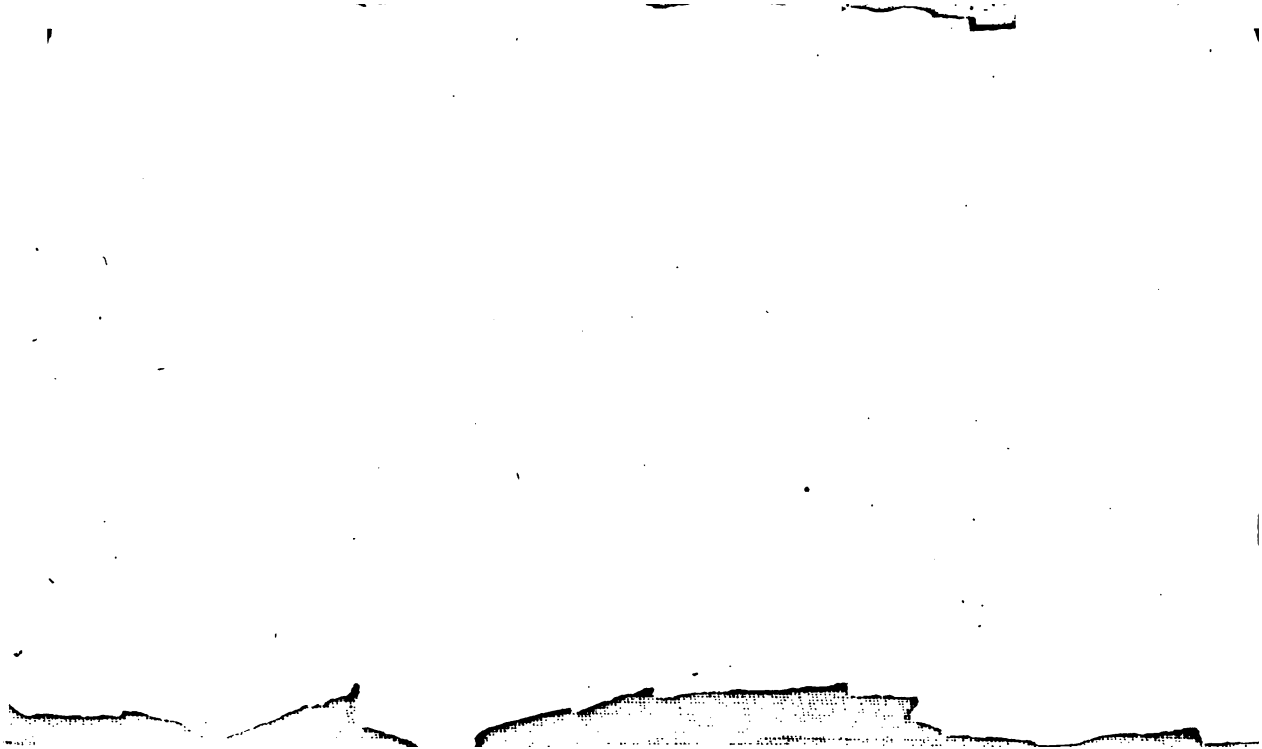

THE CANTERBURY TALES OF CHAUCER;

COMPLETED IN A MODERN VERSION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Dan Chaucer, well of Engliſh undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd.
Dan Geffrey, in whoſe gentle ſpright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell.

SPENSER.

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TO THE

REV. DR. WARTON,

LATE HEAD-MASTER OF WINCHESTER SCHOOL.

IN teſtimony no leſs of the gratitude of one, who feels every day how much he owes to his inſtructions, than of the reſpect which he, in common with all lovers of polite letters, bears neceſſarily to a writer who has exerted in their ſervice ſo fine a fancy and ſo juſt a taſte, the following Verſion of the Canterbury Tales is inſcribed, by

His ſincere admirer,

And humble ſervant,

W. LIPSCOMB.

PREFACE.

THE following collection of the Canterbury Tales, now firſt completed in a modern verſion, is offered to the public under the reaſonable confidence, that the improved taſte in poetry, and the extended cultivation of that, in common with all the other elegant arts, which ſo ſtrongly characterizes the preſent day, will make the lovers of verſe look up to the old Bard, the Father of Engliſh poetry, with a veneration proportioned to the improvements they have made in it.

The gratitude of men has in all ages been excited towards thoſe great benefactors of the human race, the inventors of arts; and it has ever made one of their moſt conſpicuous employments to erect temples to their honour: but, by a fatality almoſt unexampled, the venerable ſubject of theſe pages has found

found the *Temple of Fame* (ſo peculiarly his own) crumble from around his ſhrine: the materials with which it was built were of too periſhable a nature to ſupport the pretenſions he ſo juſtly makes to immortality; in a word, the language, in which he wrote, hath decayed from under him. It is this reaſon, and this alone, that can juſtify the attempt of exhibiting him in a modern dreſs; and though, with reſpect to tranſlations in general, I aſſent to the poſition that they ſhould be rather free than ſervile, yet in that part of the preſent work, which has fallen to my ſhare to execute, I have endeavoured to adhere to the great original the more faithfully, from the conſideration that all thoſe readers (a very numerous as well as a very reſpectable claſs) who have not given their time to the ſtudy of the old language, muſt either find a true likeneſs of Chaucer exhibited in this verſion, or they will find it no where elſe. This is not the caſe with reſpect to the writers in the dead languages: ſo long as thoſe languages ſhall be cultivated, the ſtudent of taſte may have recourſe to the original author,

thor, rather elucidated by criticiſm than impaired by time: but the fluctuating ſtate, and progreſſive improvements made in living tongues, leſſens the ardour, and reduces every day the number of thoſe who ſtudy the moſt ancient, and leaves to the profeſſed antiquary the almoſt excluſive poſſeſſion of them. Hence I have impoſed it on myſelf, as a duty ſomewhat ſacred, to deviate from my original as little as poſſible in the ſentiment, and have often in the language adopted his own expreſſions, the ſimplicity and effect of which have always forcibly ſtruck me, whenever the terms he uſes (and that happens not unfrequently) are intelligible to modern ears.

In ſome other parts of the tranſcript I have not thought myſelf tied down to the ſame fidelity: the groſſneſs and indelicacy of the times in which Chaucer lived extended their coarſe influence to writers, we well know, much poſterior to him; and therefore we cannot wonder, that the ſtream, which took ſuch a length of time to depurate, ſhould be turbid at its very ſource. But though we may

may excuſe the writer, who in a work confeſſedly popular yields what may be hoped to have been his better judgment to the taſte of the times he lives in; yet our veneration for his great and various excellencies is rather the more teſtified, by purging him from his impurities, and by exhibiting him to a more refined age a ſafe as well as a brilliant example of native genius.

In the following copy of him, it is hoped, as it is believed, that the pruning away of his indelicacies will not be found to have robbed him of any thing valuable, neither will the truth of the likeneſs appear to have been violated, ſince the exhibiting him free from ſtains has been effected ſcrupulouſly by the omiſſion of the offenſive paſſages, and not by the preſumption to ſubſtitute freſh matter.

It is proper here to obſerve, that this omiſſion hath extended to the two moſt exceptionable of his Tales (thoſe of the Miller and the Reeve); both of which being highly indelicate, as well in the ſentiments as in the language, are wholly omitted in this collection. Theſe having been removed, the improper

paſſages

paſſages that remained occaſionally interſperſed in the other tales were comparatively very few; but few as they were, they operated as a juſt bar againſt their general reception: that bar, it is humbly hoped, will be found now to be removed, and readers of every denomination may have ſafe acceſs to a writer, whom every ſucceſſive Britiſh poet, of the firſt claſs and genius, hath looked up to with admiration.

That part of the following work which has never yet appeared in a modern dreſs, commences with the Franklein's Tale, and extends (with exception only to that of the Pardoner, which was printed in 1792) to the end.

The former tales were collected by Mr. Ogle, in the year 1741, who himſelf tranſlated many of them. The Life of Chaucer, and the Introductory Diſcourſe to the Canterbury Tales, are taken from the valuable edition of his original works publiſhed by Mr. Tyrwhitt.

I muſt beg to treſpaſs on the reader's patience yet a moment longer, to give my reaſons,

ſons, why I have not paid that attention, which it deſerved, to what has been ſuggeſted to me by reſpectable authorities both public as well as private; I mean, to accompany this work with a freſh body of notes.

Though the verſion itſelf has been an agreeable and eaſy rural occupation, yet in a remote village, near 250 miles from London, the very books, trifling as they may ſeem, to which it would be neceſſary to refer, to illuſtrate the manners of the 14th century, were not to be procured; and parochial and other engagements would not admit of abſence ſufficient to conſult them where they are to be found: it is not therefore for want of deference to the opinions of thoſe, who have recommended a body of notes, that they do not accompany theſe Tales, but for want ſolely of proper materials. I have ſubjoined Mr. Tyrwhitt's ſtrictures on each Tale, and ſuch notes as I thought would be acceptable to the Reader from his valuable edition.

W. L.

Jan. 24, 1794.

POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE barely time here, the Tales being already almoſt all printed off, to apologize to the Reader for having inſerted my own tranſlation of the Nun's Prieſt's Tale, inſtead of that of Dryden: but the fact was, I did not know that Dryden's verſion exiſted; for, having undertaken to complete thoſe of the Canterbury Tales which were wanting in Ogle's collection, and the Tale in queſtion not being in that collection, I proceeded to ſupply it, having never till very lately, ſtrange as it may ſeem, ſeen the volume of Dryden's Fables, in which it may be found.

Having inſerted the Tale of Melibeus as a ſpecimen of Chaucer's manner in proſe, I have forborn to add that of the Perſon, with which the Collection ought properly to have concluded, becauſe I did not wiſh to ſwell the work with what was dry and unentertaining. —In the original the more curious Reader may at any time have acceſs to it.

W. L.

Aug. 25, 1794.

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THE

LIFE

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, the Father of our Engliſh poets, and the firſt great improver and reformer of our language, flouriſhed in the 14th century; and as he juſtly obtained the higheſt admiration amongſt his contemporaries, ſo his memory has ever ſince been highly honoured. One would imagine from this that every hiſtorical circumſtance relating to him, or at leaſt thoſe of the greateſt moment, ſhould be well preſerved, and be perfectly clear, which however is ſo far from being the caſe, that nothing can hitherto be certainly determined concerning his deſcent, or ſo much as who was his father. Leland ſays that he

was of a noble ſtock, Pitts that he was the ſon of a knight, Speght that his father was a vintner, Hearne that he was a merchant; and the fifth and laſt opinion, which is the beſt, is, that nothing can be ſaid with any tolerable aſſurance of his family at all, but that there is ſomewhat more probability of his being the ſon of a gentleman rather than of a tradeſman*.

The

* *Rather than of a tradeſman.*] It is a point well agreed amongſt our ancient authors, that the French ſirname of this family, which was variouſly written, as for inſtance, Chaucier, Chaucierris, Chauſſier, Chauſir, &c. ſignified a ſhoemaker; but notwithſtanding this, it is very well known that the founder of this family in England was a Norman chief that came over with William the Conqueror, as appears by the roll of Battle-Abbey; and in ſucceeding times there were ſeveral perſons of note of this name mentioned in our records. In the reign of King John there was one Le Chauſir, as appears by the records in the Tower; and in the reign of Henry III. one Elias Chauceſir, who in the reign following, viz. Edward I. had a grant of ten ſhillings from the Treaſury; there was alſo one John Chaucer, of whom King Edward I. heard a complaint for a thouſand pounds: but all this gives us no kind of certainty in reſpect to our Author's family at all. Leland contents himſelf with hinting that he was of a genteel extraction, *nobili loco natus*, are his words; and it is ſaid that he is faithfully copied by Bale: but this is to be underſtood of the later editions of his book; for in the firſt he calls him Sir Geoffrey Chaucer, Knight, and ſays nothing of his family at all; afterwards he met with Leland's book, and abridged his account of him. John Pitts is very clear that he was of an exceeding good family, and not only a knight himſelf, but his father a knight before him: but his authority goes for little,

The place of his birth is as much diſputed, but however may be determined with greater appearance of

little, more eſpecially with thoſe that know him beſt. Mr. Speght is of opinion that one Richard Chaucer was his father, who was a vintner at the corner of Kirton-Lane, and dying in 1348, left his houſe, tavern, and ſtock, to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, where he was buried. This paſſed currently with Fuller, and perhaps the better becauſe it furniſhed him with a very ſilly jeſt; "His father," ſays he, "was a vintner in Lon-"don; and I have heard his arms quarrelled at being *argent* and "*gules*, ſtrangely contrived, and hard to be blazoned: ſome "more wits have made it the daſhing of white and red wine (the "parents of our ordinary claret), as nicking his father's profeſ-"ſion." Againſt this opinion, however, there lie two exceptions, that ſolider heads than his have not been able to get over; the firſt is, that there was ſomething very unnatural in this vintner's leaving all his eſtate to the church while his ſon was at the univerſity; and the ſecond, that Chaucer ſhould never complain of this, or, for any thing that we can diſcover, feel the effects of it, ſince it is evident enough that in his youth he lived at a rate that could not have been ſupported without a fortune. The induſtrious Mr. Hearne thinks it probable his father was a merchant of London; but the laſt writer of his life thinking that father not good enough for him, hath found him out a better, one Sir John Chaucer, for which he has no other evidence than that ſuch a man lived at a time when our poet might poſſibly have been his ſon. I muſt confeſs I think he was of a good family, and that for various reaſons, which, becauſe I do not know they have been taken notice of before, I will mention as briefly as I can. Firſt then, his education ſpeaks him a gentleman bred at both the Univerſities, travelled through ſeveral countries, and at laſt a ſtu-

of truth; for though Bale ſays he was a Berkſhire man, and Pitts would entitle Oxfordſhire to his birth, yet if we may rely upon what he tells us himſelf (Teſt. of Love), it is much more likely that he drew his firſt breath in the city of London; and that he had a great intereſt amongſt its inhabitants is a thing as certain as that it drew upon him many misfortunes, notwithſtanding which his having that intereſt ſeems to be a corroborating proof of his being a citizen's ſon*.

The

dent in the Temple, where it is reported that he was fined two ſhillings for beating a friar in Fleet-ſtreet. Next, his poſt at court ſhews him to have been a gentleman, for birth was much ſtood upon in thoſe days, and young men of the beſt quality were the King's pages. Thirdly, this is confirmed by his marriage, which ſo proud a man as John of Gaunt would not have admitted, if he had been of a mean deſcent, much leſs have recommended him to his wife, and thereby made him the uncle-in-law of his own children. Fourthly, his writings ſhew him a gentleman, for they are all written with ſuch freedom and ſpirit as muſt have expoſed him to great envy if he had not been a gentleman, and which he would probably have appeaſed by ſome reaſonable apology. Laſtly, the company he kept, and the reſpect that was conſtantly paid him, ſeem the cleareſt teſtimonies of this, which with the reſt I ſubmit to the deciſion of the intelligent reader.

* *Of his being a citizen's ſon.*] It ſeems to have been a doubt with Leland whether Oxfordſhire or Berkſhire produced this great man;

The time of his birth is pretty well fixed, for moſt of the writers who mention it agree that it was in the ſecond year of Edward III. A. D. 1328.

Here

man; but he thought he had reaſon to think that he was born in one of thoſe counties. If Berkſhire was to be preferred, then Dunnington would bid the faireſt for it, which was certainly Chaucer's ſeat; but then it ſeems to be no leſs certain that he purchaſed it from Sir Richard Adderbury. Pitts affirms roundly that he was born at Woodſtock; and Camden, ſpeaking of that place, ſays that, having nothing in it elſe remarkable, it boaſts of having produced our Engliſh Homer, Geoffrey Chaucer: but he was too knowing a man to credit this; he knew the reaſon of it to be that Chaucer had a houſe there, and Ewelm and Hocknorton in the ſame county were alſo belonging to his family, and might therefore with as much juſtice as Woodſtock put in a claim to his birth. But Chaucer himſelf ſeems to have determined the point as clearly as man could do; for, ſpeaking of the troubles that had happened in this place, he ſays, "The city of "London, that is to me ſo dear and ſweet, in which I was "forth-grown; and more kindly love have I to that place than "any other on earth, as every kindly creature hath full appetite "to that place of his kindly engendruer," &c. and therefore Camden very juſtly takes occaſion, ſpeaking of another poet, to affirm that London was our Author's birth-place: "Edmund "Spenſer," ſays he, "a Londoner, was ſo ſmiled on by the "Muſes at his birth, that he excelled all the Engliſh poets that "went before him, if we except only his fellow-citizen Chaucer." It may ſeem a little difficult to reconcile what is ſaid in this note to what has been advanced in the former; and yet it may be done tolerably well; for though we now conſider a citizen of London as a trader of courſe, yet in the times when Chaucer lived,

Here again we fall into the dark; for as to his earlier years, we know not where or how they were ſpent; but as ſoon as he was fit for academical ſtudies, he was ſent to Cambridge, where he gave early teſtimonies of his abilities by ſeveral elegies and ſonnets, as well as by a poem called The Court of Love, which he compoſed when he was about eighteen, and which carries in it very pregnant proofs of ſkill and learning, as well as quickneſs of wit and great

men of great quality and diſtinction reſided in the city, where the court was alſo kept, and therefore he might very well be in this ſenſe the ſon of an inhabitant of London, and ſtill his father might not be either merchant or vintner, but in ſome poſt about the court; and this in ſo dark a matter, and which has employed ſo many learned pens, without letting in much light upon it, ſeems the moſt probable account of the matter: for in that diſcourſe in which he ſpeaks of London as his birth-place, he very clearly confeſſes that he had been but too deeply engaged in the popular diſturbances that happened there, through his attachment to his patron the Duke of Lancaſter, which ſhews the intereſt he had among the people; and yet he affirms that in what he did he had no evil intention, much leſs meant to throw all things into confuſion; and offers it as a reaſon why he ſhould be believed in declaring this, that he was a native of London, and loved it better than any place upon earth, as every creature naturally does the place from which it ſprings. After clearing up theſe points as far as poſſible, we ſhall be more brief in our remarks upon other points of this hiſtory, though a large and full life of Chaucer ſeems to be a work ſtill wanting to the learned world, after all the pains that has been hitherto taken about it.

ſtrength

ſtrength of genius *. It is not by any means certain in what college or hall of that univerſity he ſtudied: but

* *And great ſtrength of genius.*] The moſt certain accounts we have of Chaucer are thoſe taken from his own writings, in which there are a great variety of circumſtances that occur not in any of the ancient relations of his life, inſomuch that it is very doubtful whether we ſhould ever have heard any thing of his being a ſtudent at Cambridge, if he had not left us that particular himſelf. In like manner it might have been preſumed, but it could hardly have been proved, that his Court of Love was not his firſt performance, or at leaſt his firſt performance that made any great figure. But from the peruſal of this poem we learn from himſelf, that he had written many things before in honour of the deity of Love. Indeed the poem itſelf ſpeaks it probable; for though we have a very high idea of the natural genius of Chaucer, yet it would be impoſſible to perſuade any judge of poetry that this was his firſt eſſay; for not only the ſtructure of the poem manifeſts an extraordinary ſkill in that kind of writing, but the harmony of his numbers, even at this diſtance of time, ſufficiently ſhew that they could not fall from the pen of an unpractiſed poet. It is generally believed, upon the credit I apprehend of the rubrick placed at the head of this performance, that it was written in imitation of The Romant of the Roſe; but I muſt confeſs I am not very well ſatisfied of that, and ſhould rather be of opinion that our Author compoſed it after the manner of thoſe Italian poems that were then ſo generally eſteemed, and for which the famous Francis Petrarch had been crowned ſome years before with great ſolemnity at Rome. The honours which that celebrated poet acquired, and which he had never acquired but in an age of the greateſt gallantry, excited all who had any turn that way to emulate his performances. We may very

but it is conjectured, and not without ſome ſhew of reaſon, that it might be in Solere's Hall, which he has ſo particularly and humorouſly deſcribed in his ſtory of The Miller of Trompington.

He removed from Cambridge, for reaſons which we find no where aſſigned, to the Univerſity of Oxford, and completed his ſtudies there, ſome ſay at Canterbury College, which however is improbable, ſince it was not founded till Chaucer was thirty-five

plainly perceive, in this work of Chaucer's, that he meant to make his entrance by it into the region of Parnaſſus, and boldly reſolved, on the ſtrength of his own judgment as well as of his genius, to declare himſelf a poet, and put himſelf that way into the road to fame. If this had not been his intention, he would have ſcarce written The Court of Love, the ground of which poem is to ſhew that it was a tribunal to which every man owed obedience, which ſooner or later he was obliged to pay. As for himſelf, he profeſſes that he was ſummoned to do ſuit and ſervice at the age of eighteen, which affords him an opportunity of deſcribing the Court, the manner of its proceedings, and the ſtatutes of Love by which thoſe proceedings are regulated. This poem is very long, conſiſting of upwards of fourteen hundred verſes, and concludes with the feſtival of Love, which with great elegance our poet fixes upon the 1ſt of May, and makes it celebrated by the birds: yet this part of the poem is the moſt exceptionable of any, and ſhews what a ſtrange taſte prevailed in that age; for in this feſtival not only the hymns of the church, but the Pſalms themſelves are very ſcandalouſly profaned, and applied to the god of Love and his mother, which ſhews the bad conſequences that naturally flow from ſuperſtitious devotion.

years

years of age; others in Merton College, which is more likely; for though his name does not appear among the celebrated members of it at that time, yet we find moſt of his contemporaries, as Strode, Occleve, &c. were of that College. After a conſiderable ſtay here, and a ſtrict application to the publick lectures of the univerſity, he became, as Leland tells us, a ready logician, a ſmooth rhetorician, a pleaſant poet, a grave philoſopher, an ingenious mathematician, and a holy divine. That he was a great maſter in aſtronomy is plain from his Diſcourſes of the Aſtrolabe; that he was verſed in the Hermetick philoſophy appears by his Tale of the Chanon's Yeoman; his knowledge in divinity is evident from his Parſon's Tale; and his philoſophy from the Teſtament of Love.

After he left this univerſity, he travelled abroad through France and the Low Countries, in order to ſee the world, and to improve the knowledge which he had acquired from books: but when he went abroad, or at what time he returned, are circumſtances not eaſy to be determined. Yet ſure there is a probability that he ſpent not many years out of his own country, ſince the beſt writers ſeem to be well ſatisfied that after his return he entered himſelf of the Middle

Middle Temple, and became a ſtudent there of the municipal laws of this land. Of this learning having received ſome tincture, he betook himſelf to the court, which was indeed the place in the world fitteſt for a man of his accompliſhments to thrive in. His firſt employment there was in quality of the King's Page, in thoſe times a very honourable office, as it gave near and frequent acceſs to the royal preſence: but one would imagine this was not a poſt to which any but a young man could be advanced upon his coming to court, and therefore it ſeems moſt conſiſtent with truth to believe that Geoffrey Chaucer could not at his admittance exceed thirty *.

At

* *Could not at* that time *exceed thirty.*] We have intimated in the text, that our Author ſeems to have owed his admittance into the King's ſervice in quality of Page, which in the Latin of thoſe times was called *valettus* or *valectus*, an honour that young noblemen of the firſt rank were glad to accept, to the favour of the King's ſon, John of Gaunt, afterwards Duke of Lancaſter, of which no notice is taken by any of thoſe who have hitherto collected the memoirs of his life. Yet we do not aſſert this without authority; for it appears by a poem of his called Chaucer's Dream, firſt printed in the year 1597, that he was very deep in this young prince's amorous ſecrets; for that poem is an allegorical hiſtory of the loves of John of Gaunt and Blanch of Lancaſter, daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaſter, which from this very poem it appears were managed with the utmoſt ſecreſy, till by a long train of intrigues and ſolicitations all the obſtacles in

At this time the Engliſh court was the moſt gay and ſplendid in Europe. Edward III. a prince equally diſtinguiſhed by civil and martial virtues, ſat then upon the throne, bleſſed with an illuſtrious conſort, by whom he had a numerous poſterity. His many victories had rendered him famous abroad, and his moderation and clemency, his reverence for the

in the way of this match were got over, and with the help of the King's conſent and the Pope's diſpenſation they were married in May 1359, which as it was the firſt introduction to John of Gaunt's vaſt power and greatneſs, ſo it ſeems to have been the beginning of our Author's fortunes at court; at leaſt it is certain that the knowledge he had of this affair was what made him equally the favourite of the Duke of Lancaſter and of the Ducheſs Blanch, who, as the higheſt teſtimony of her friendſhip, gave him the ſiſter of her favourite lady in marriage, which is alſo intimated at the cloſe of this poem. But this is quite a different thing from another under the ſame title, that in the old manuſcripts is and ought to be entitled The Book of the Ducheſs, written not upon her marriage, but upon her death; and this being wrote in the manner of a viſion, and the other not being diſcovered, came to be called Chaucer's Dream, becauſe that title appeared in ſome old liſts of his Works. As the credit of the Duke of Lancaſter increaſed with his father, Chaucer's alſo roſe in a like proportion; for he continued ſteady to his patron to the laſt hour of that duke's life; and indeed, conſidering his alliance, as well as his obligations, we need not at all wonder that he did: but after ſaying all this, it will be very proper to add, that, notwithſtanding his fidelity to his patron, he did not go all lengths with him, but kept exactly within the bounds of loyalty to his prince, as well as thoſe of duty to his benefactor.

laws,

laws, and his kindneſs for his people, made him beloved at home; ſo that our chronicles boaſt of few reigns more glorious, and of none brighter, than his. Among other great qualities with which this famous monarch was endued, his love of learning and learned men was not the leaſt conſpicuous; and therefore we need not wonder that our Author, who was continually giving ſome ſpecimen or other of the vivacity of his parts, wrought himſelf into high favour, inſomuch that it appears that he was a conſtant attendant on the court, and when it was at Woodſtock reſided at a ſquare ſtone houſe near the park-gate, which ſtill retains his name; and well indeed it may, ſince being conſecrated in his poems, the whole country round about is become, in reſpect to Engliſhmen, a kind of claſſick ground *.

But

* *A kind of claſſick ground.*] In order to juſtify this, we need only obſerve that many of the rural deſcriptions that occur in his Works are taken from Woodſtock-Park, of which he tells us, that it was a park walled with green ſtone, that being the firſt park walled in England, and not many years before his time. In moſt of his pieces where he deſigns an imaginary ſcene, he certainly copies it from a real landſcape; ſo in his Cuckoo and Nightingale, the morning walk he takes was ſuch as at this day may be traced from his houſe through part of the park, and down by the brook into the vale under Blenheim-Caſtle, as certainly

But beſides his employment about the perſon of his prince, our poet took pains to advance his fortune by attaching himſelf to the ſervice of John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaſter, by whom and by his Ducheſs Blanch, a lady equally remarkable for her wit and

tainly as we may aſſert that maples inſtead of phyllereas were the ornaments round the bower, which place he likewiſe deſcribes in his Dream, as a white caſtle ſtanding upon a hill, the ſcene in that poem being laid in Woodſtock-Park. When diſengaged from publick affairs, his time was entirely ſpent in ſtudying and walking: ſo agreeable to him was this exerciſe, that he ſays he preferred it to all other ſports and diverſions. He lived within himſelf, neither deſirous to hear, nor buſy to concern himſelf with, the affairs of his neighbours. His courſe of living was temperate and regular; he went to reſt with the ſun, and roſe before it, and by that means enjoyed the pleaſures of the better part of the day, his morning walk and freſh contemplations. This gave him the advantage of deſcribing the morning in ſo lively a manner as he does every where in his Works; the ſpringing ſun glows warm in his lines, and the fragrant air blows cool in his deſcriptions; we ſmell the ſweets of the bloomy haws, and hear the muſick of the feathered choir, whenever we take a foreſt walk with him. The hour of the day is not eaſier to be diſcovered from the reflection of the ſun in Titian's paintings than in Chaucer's morning landſcapes. 'Tis true thoſe deſcriptions are ſometimes too long, and, as it is before obſerved, when he takes thoſe early rambles, he almoſt tires his reader with following him, and ſeldom knows how to get out of a foreſt when once entered into it; but how advantageous this beautiful extravagance is moſt of his ſucceſſors well know, who have very plentifully lopt off his exuberant beauties, and placed them as the chief ornaments of their own writings.

virtue,

virtue, he was exceedingly beloved; nor was it long before he became part of their family alſo. It happened thus. This Ducheſs entertained in her ſervice one Catharine Rouet, daughter of Sir Payne or Pagan Rouet, a native of Hainault, and Guien King at Arms for that country, who was afterwards married to Sir Hugh Swynford, a knight of Lincoln. He lived not long after their marriage, and upon his deceaſe this lady returned into the Duke's family, and was appointed governeſs of his children. She had a ſiſter whoſe name was Philippa, a great favourite likewiſe with the Duke and Ducheſs, and by them therefore, as a mark of their great eſteem, recommended to Chaucer for a wife. He married her about the year 1360, when he was in the flower of his age, and, as appears from a picture of him taken about that time, one of the handſomeſt perſons about the court, of a complexion fair and beautiful, his lips very red and full, his ſize of a juſt proportion, his air very graceful and majeſtick. We live at too great a diſtance of time to be able to penetrate with certainty into the true motives of our Author's match; but ſure there is a great probability that he was not unacquainted with the tenderneſs which his patron the Duke of Lancaſter had for the Lady Swynford, by whom

n he had ſeveral children, who were afterwards
mated by act of parliament. Yet this alliance
not the only tie he had upon that prince, one of
oſt ambitious and artful men of his time, and
ys embarked in ſome ſtate-intrigue or other, and
fore above all things fond of having men of parts
iterature about him, of whom he might make
s occaſion offered, and in which capacity as there
none more able, ſo it appears there were none
im greater ſervice than Chaucer.

ing thus ſupported, we need not wonder that his
nes made a very quick progreſs at court, and ac-
ngly we find very many marks of his maſter
; Edward's kindneſs towards him; as for in-
e, in the 41ſt year of his reign he granted him an
ity of twenty marks *per annum* out of the Ex-
uer. How mean ſoever ſuch a penſion may
now, it was then very conſiderable, and in
cer's caſe was ſtill the more valuable as being
rneſt of future favours; for not long after we
aim Gentleman of the King's Privy-Chamber,
y that title the King granted to him, by letters
t, dated in the 45th year of his reign, the ſur-
ſum of twenty marks *per annum* during his

In

In this ſtation he did not long continue, being next year made Shieldbearer to the King, a title at that time, though now extinct, of great honour, ſuch perſons being always next the King's perſon, and generally upon ſignal victories rewarded with military honours. Neither were theſe all the inſtances he received of the King's attention to and confidence in him; for in the very ſame year, and by the ſame title, we find him commiſſioned, in conjunction with other perſons, to treat with the republick of Genoa; and accordingly thither he went, and actually managed a negotiation, concerning the ſubject of which thoſe who have written our Author's life make not the leaſt mention, but ſeem to treat it as a matter, at this diſtance of time, altogether inexplicable. But it may from the hiſtory of that prince's reign be very probably inferred that Chaucer was ſent to Genoa to hire ſhips for the King's navy; for in thoſe times though we frequently made great naval armaments, yet we had but very few ſhips of our own; and this defect was ſupplied by hiring them from the free ſtates either in Germany or Italy. In this negotiation our Author ſucceeded ſo well, that, upon his return home, he received new marks of his royal maſter's favour, for by letters patent, dated at Windſor the 23d of April,

April, in the 48th year of his reign, his Majeſty granted him a pitcher of wine daily in the Port of London, to be delivered by the Butler of England; and very ſoon after he was made Comptroller of the Cuſtoms in the Port of London for wool, wool-fells, and hides, with a proviſo that he ſhould perſonally execute that office, and keep the accounts of it with his own hand. As this was a very lucrative, ſo it was a very reputable employment likewiſe; and as Chaucer was enriched by the profits of his poſt, ſo his reputation was very much increaſed by that diligence and integrity with which he diſcharged it. He values himſelf, as he had reaſon to do, very much upon his conduct in this office, which he affirms was never liable to any kind of imputation. And indeed it is highly probable that what he has delivered upon this ſubject is ſtrictly true; for in the latter end of King Edward's reign there were great frauds and embezzlements committed in the Cuſtoms, which by proſecutions were brought to publick view; but we do not find that in theſe Chaucer's name was ſo much as mentioned. About a year after he was in poſſeſſion of this office, the King made him a grant of the lands and body of Sir Edmund Staplegate, ſon of Sir Edmund Staplegate of Kent, in ward, for which he re-

ceived one hundred and four pounds; and other pecuniary advantages he had, which enabled him to raiſe all together an income of one thouſand pounds *per annum*, which was in thoſe days a prodigious ſum, and might well enable him to live, as he ſays he did, with dignity in office, and with good will amongſt his neighbours. But as all theſe benefits aroſe chiefly from the favour in which he ſtood with the potent and ambitious Duke of Lancaſter, ſo he became daily more and more involved in the political intrigues of that active and ambitious prince. It is ſuggeſted by many of our hiſtorians, that this duke had caſt a longing eye upon the crown; and it is attributed to this, that about the time our Author was ſent to Genoa, the King declared, in full parliament, the young Prince Richard, the only ſurviving ſon of Edward the Black Prince, heir-apparent to the crown. But there ſeems to be a plainer and more natural reaſon for the King's taking this ſtep, in which none more readily concurred than the Duke of Lancaſter; and that was his own and his ſon's going abroad to carry on the war in France, upon which occaſion it was requiſite that the ſucceſſion ſhould be ſettled; and therefore the young Prince Richard was not only declared heir-apparent, but the government of the kingdom

kingdom was, nominally at leaſt, intruſted with him during the abſence of his grandfather, his father, and uncles. But what ſeems to be a ſtronger proof of the Duke of Lancaſter's innocence in this reſpect, was his marrying, upon the deceaſe of his Ducheſs Blanch, the Lady Conſtantia, daughter of Peter the Cruel, King of Caſtile and Leon, in whoſe right upon the deceaſe of her father he aſſumed thoſe royal titles. This muſt be allowed to be a mark of his ambition, and of his inclination to be a king; but at the ſame time it is a proof that he had another crown in view than that of England, and therefore to this we may well aſcribe that device of his, of an eagle endeavouring with his bill to undo a footlock, which many of our writers, with more malignity than judgment, have conſtrued into a kind of treaſon. It is however true that after the deceaſe of his eldeſt brother, Edward the Black Prince, he was aſſociated by his father in the government, and had the principal direction of publick affairs, which, conſidering his age, his experience, and his very near relation to the crown, may be looked upon as a thing rather natural than extraordinary.

In this happy ſeaſon of his life, when he enjoyed all the bleſſings this world could afford, Chaucer com-

poſed moſt of thoſe gay and lively pieces which were ſo much adapted to the humour of theſe times, and to that romantick ſpirit of love and fighting which in thoſe days were ſo much in vogue, and by which he acquired ſo great and ſo extenſive a reputation for his wit and for his capacity in writing *. But it was not long before he found himſelf obliged to turn his thoughts to graver ſubjects; for his patron the Duke of

* *And for his capacity in writing.*] We have already mentioned ſome of the performances of our Author while a very young man, and alſo ſome of thoſe pieces that he wrote to compliment the Duke of Lancaſter and his Ducheſs. We will here take an opportunity of giving an account of ſome other pieces of his that were wrote within the time of his greateſt proſperity. The Complaint of Mary Magdalen, taken from Origen, was tranſlated either before or ſoon after his coming to court, perhaps to oblige ſome pious lady of thoſe times, as he wrote that which is called Chaucer's A, B, C, for the uſe of the Ducheſs Blanch. The Complaint of the Black Knight was penned in honour of John of Gaunt's courtſhip of that lady, and is as elegant and harmonious a poem as any of our Author's compoſure, ſo that it is reaſonable to believe he took extraordinary pains about it; and perhaps it would be no unreaſonable conjecture if we ſhould ſuppoſe that it was written upon his firſt admiſſion to the intimacy of that great prince, who is repreſented under the character of the Black Knight. The Houſe of Fame is alſo a moſt admirable performance, as well in the conſtruction of the fable as in the eaſe and happineſs of its execution, of which there cannot be a higher teſtimony than Mr. Pope's borrowing from thence the model of his Temple of Fame, which will probably

of Lancaſter having eſpouſed the cauſe of Wickliffe, whom the clergy conſidered as a heretick, Chaucer inclined

bably be eſteemed as long as there is either taſte or poetry in this nation. The Aſſembly of Fowls was written while he was at court, and before the death of King Edward's queen Philippa; and ſo was his tale of The Cuckoo and the Nightingale, in which, as was obſerved in the preceding note, the ſcene is viſibly laid in Woodſtock-Park. He likewiſe wrote abundance of elegies, poems, or ballads, in honour of Margaret Counteſs of Pembroke, and other ladies of the court; and as it is natural to ſuppoſe that he was not the only perſon who wrote things of this kind, ſo, by an accident common enough to great men, all of thoſe pieces which have ſurvived the injuries of time are come down to us under the name of Chaucer, though it might be very eaſily proved that they are none of his. The poem of Troilus and Creſeide was written in the former part of his life, and tranſlated, as he ſays, from Lollius, an hiſtoriographer of Urbano in Italy. He did not however content himſelf with making a cloſe tranſlation of his author, but, on the contrary, added many things of his own, and borrowed alſo from others, more eſpecially his friend Petrarch, whatever he judged might render it acceptable to his reader. That diſcourſe of Predeſtination which he has inſerted in the fourth book is entirely his own; and from it, and from what he has delivered upon the ſame ſubject in The Nun's Prieſt's Tale, the very learned Sir Henry Savile thought that he was no ſtranger to Archbiſhop Bradwardine's learned book *de Cauſa Dei*, publiſhed at that time. Sir Francis Kinaſton, who tranſlated this poem into Latin rhymes, in his manuſcript notes upon it, ſays, that it was not improbably conjectured that Chaucer, in writing The Lives and Loves of Troilus and Creſeide, glanced at ſome private perſons in the court of King Edward III. and did not follow Homer, Dares,

inclined the ſame way, and turned the edge of his ſatire againſt lazy monks, ignorant prieſts, and the inſolence of ſuch as belonged to eccleſiaſtical courts, with extraordinary ſucceſs. Yet it does not at all appear that he was an enemy to religion, or even to that of the church of Rome, but rather the contrary; for he ſpeaks very ſubmiſſively of her doctrines, and beſtows high characters upon ſuch of the clergy as acted ſuitably to their calling: ſo that it was the ill men, who brought religion into contempt, and proſtituted their own function in the vileſt manner, that felt the ſeverity of Chaucer's Muſe, and not prieſts in general, or the Chriſtian faith; for the former he highly revered, and the latter he firmly believed, as his writings plainly ſhew *. But how much ſoever

Dictys, or any hiſtorian of thoſe times. However, ſays he, Chaucer has taken the liberty of his own inventions; he hath made an admirable and inimitable epick poem, deſcribing in Troilus a complete knight in arms and courtſhip, and a faithful and conſtant lover, and in Creſeide a moſt beautiful and coy lady, which being once overcome yields to the frailty of her ſex. We ſhall have occaſion hereafter to ſpeak more largely of this worthy perſon's performance, and of the pains he took to illuſtrate Chaucer, in which he equalled at leaſt, if not exceeded, all who have ſpent their time in doing juſtice to this great poet.

* *As his writings plainly ſhew.*] The true deſign of our Author was not to expoſe or abuſe the clergy from a diſlike to their

ver Wickliffe's doctrines might prevail, or Chaucer's writings pleaſe, among the better ſort of people and in

their order, but, quite the contrary, to amend and to reform them; and it was with this view that he wrote many pieces, and tranſlated others, that they might plainly perceive how much religion ſuffered by the monſtrous irregularities in their behaviour. As for inſtance, The Romant of the Roſe is a tranſlation from the French. This poem was begun by William de Lorris, and continued by John Meung, commonly called Cloppinel, both famous French poets in their time. It ſeems to have been tranſlated by Chaucer while he was at court, and about the time of the riſe of Wickliffe's opinions, it conſiſting of violent invectives againſt the religious orders. It is left imperfect at the end, and there are ſome lacunas in other places of it. It may not be amiſs to obſerve here, that the original author of this work, William de Lorris, died in the year 1260, at the age of twenty-ſix, and advanced no great way therein; but forty years afterwards it was finiſhed and publiſhed by John de Meung, when he was in his twenty-fourth year. He was a man of ſenſe and learning, well verſed in divinity, philoſophy, chymiſtry, aſtronomy, and other ſciences, but was a violent enemy to bad prieſts and bad women: he is ſuppoſed to have died about the year 1365. This work is ſtill much eſteemed in France, where it has run through many editions; but the beſt, which was publiſhed in Holland, is of a very freſh date. Beſides this, Chaucer is affirmed by Leland and other ancient writers to have been the author of The Plowman's Tale, which bears very hard upon the vices of the clergy both ſecular and regular; and the ſatire under the title of Jack Upland is alſo attributed to him upon very good authority; notwithſtanding which there want not many who, under colour of veneration for Chaucer's memory, are deſirous of imputing theſe pieces to

in the country, they were far enough from making a general impreſſion on the minds of people in London,

others: and yet this would be of little uſe; for in many other works that are undoubtedly his we find ſentiments of the ſame nature. On the other hand, the venerable John Fox thinks the labour of our Author in this reſpect worthy the higheſt commendation, and even attributes the preſervation of his Works to a particular providence. Let us hear him. "I marvel to conſider this," ſays he, "how that the Biſhops condemning and "aboliſhing all manner of Engliſh books and treatiſes which "might bring the people to any light of knowledge, did yet au-"thoriſe the Works of Chaucer to remain ſtill, and to be occu-"pied, who no doubt ſaw in religion as much almoſt as ever we "do now, and uttereth in his Works no leſs, and ſeemeth to be "a right Wicklivian, or elſe there was never any; and that all "his Works almoſt, if they be thoroughly adviſed, will teſtify "(albeit it be done in mirth and covertly), and eſpecially the latter "end of his third book of The Teſtament of Love; for there "purely he toucheth the higheſt matter, that is, the communion, "wherein, except a man be altogether blind, he may eſpy him at "the full; although in the ſame book (as in all other he uſeth "to do) under ſhadows covertly, as under a vizor, he ſuborneth "truth in ſuch ſort as both privily ſhe may profit the godly-"minded, and yet not be eſpied of the crafty adverſary; and "therefore the Biſhops, belike taking his words but for jeſts "and toys, in condemning other books, yet permitted his "books to be read. So it pleaſed God then to blind the eyes of "them for the more commodity of his people, to the intent "that through the reading of his Treatiſes ſome fruit might "redound thereof to his church, as no doubt it did to many. "As alſo I am partly informed of certain which knew the par-"ties,

London, where the meaner ſort of citizens were ſo warmly attached to the church, that upon the Duke of Lancaſter's attending Wickliffe when he was ſummoned before the Biſhop of London, and treating that prelate a little roughly, they made a kind of inſurrection, and marching down into the Strand in a body, entered into and rifled the Savoy, which was the Duke of Lancaſter's palace, built by himſelf, and at that time eſteemed one of the fineſt houſes in Europe, deſtroyed his goods, abuſed his ſervants, and turned his arms upſide down, as if he had been a traitor: but by the care of the King, and the interpoſition of ſome of the principal nobility, this quarrel was compromiſed, and the Duke and the citizens reconciled, at leaſt in appearance.

In the laſt year of King Edward, the French having infringed the truce which that monarch had concluded with them, commiſſionaries were ſent over to expoſtulate that matter before the Pope's legates, and of theſe Chaucer was one. This negotiation of

"ties, which to them reported that by reading Chaucer's Works "they were brought to the true knowledge of religion: and not "unlike to be true; for to omit the other parts of his Volume, "whereof ſome are more fabulous than other, what tale can be "more plainly told than The Tale of the Ploughman?" &c.

theirs

theirs was not very ſucceſsful, only it produced ſome mention of a marriage between Richard Prince of Wales and the Lady Mary, daughter to the French king, and thereby made way for a new treaty, in which Sir Guiſcard Dangle, Knight of the Garter, Sir Richard Sturrey, a great Wickliviſt, and in high favour with the King, together with Geoffrey Chaucer, Eſq. were commiſſioners; and this ſeems to have been the laſt publick employment that our Author bore; though from a gold chain about his neck, in that original picture of his ſtill remaining as is before mentioned, it has been not without ſome ſhew of reaſon conjectured that he was honoured with ſome other dignity than from any records we have been able to trace; for it can hardly be ſuppoſed that he wore this ornament on account of his office in the Cuſtoms.

June 21ſt, 1377, the young Prince of Wales ſucceeded his grandfather by the title of Richard II. and his uncle the Duke of Lancaſter, conſidering the incapacity of the King, who was then but eleven years of age, was entruſted with the chief ſhare of the adminiſtration; and therefore, to ingratiate himſelf with the populace, he reſolved to ſolemnize the new monarch's coronation with greater pomp and magnificence

ſence than had been ever ſeen in this kingdom, previous to which a court of claims was eſtabliſhed to ſettle the demands of thoſe who ſhould pretend to have a right to aſſiſt upon this occaſion, and among theſe we find Geoffrey Chaucer*.

It

* *And among theſe we find Geoffrey Chaucer.*] The claim made upon this occaſion was in right of his ward, who was poſſeſſed of the manor of Bilſington in Kent, which was held of the crown by the ſervice of preſenting to the King three maple cups on the day of his coronation. This manor had been purchaſed by Sir Edmond Staplegate, the father of Richard Fitz-Allen Earl of Arundel, whoſe family had been in long poſſeſſion of it; and it was ſet forth in Chaucer's petition, that the manor was held by Grand Serjeantry, by the owner's diſcharging the office of Chief Butler at the King's coronation. But Richard Earl of Arundel controverted this claim, and by his petition and plea ſet forth, that the office of Chief Butler belonged to his family, and was never annexed to this manor, his anceſtors having enjoyed it both before they held that manor and ſince they parted with it, and therefore he demanded it as his proper right. The iſſue of this buſineſs was, that the Earl ſo far carried his point before John Duke of Lancaſter, then acting as Lord High-Steward, as to be allowed to officiate for that time with a *ſalvo jure* that it ſhould not infringe the right of Edmond Staplegate, or any who ſhould pretend title for the future. This ward of our Author died about thirteen years after, but the manor continued in the family till the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. when it paſſed into that of the Cheyneys, who in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign ſold it to Sir Francis Barham of London, and his grandſon Mr. Robert Barham was in poſſeſſion of it at the coronation of King Charles II. when Mr. Eraſmus Smith, on the

It appears plainly that the Duke of Lancaſter, who was now in the zenith of power, let ſlip no opportunity of ſerving ſo firm a friend and ſo uſeful a dependent as our Author was; for in the very beginning of this reign, it appears that by letters patent, dated March 23d, 1377, the King confirmed his grandfather's grant of twenty marks a year; and by other letters patent, dated the 18th of April following, he likewiſe confirmed the other grant of a pitcher of wine daily: but whether Chaucer remained in his office of Comptroller of the Cuſtoms is not ſo clear, though the contrary ſeems to be moſt probable; for in a ſhort time after his affairs were in ſuch confuſion we find, that, in the ſecond year of King Richard, he was obliged to have recourſe to the King's protection, in order to ſcreen him from his creditors: but how he came to fall into theſe difficulties, and whether they were temporary only, or of a long continuance, is a point that at this diſtance it is not poſſible to aſcertain; but, from a compariſon of circumſtances, it ſeems to be moſt likely that it was from ſome ſudden accident he fell under

the behalf of the ſaid Mr. Barham, aſſiſted at the coronation, and preſented the three maple cups. This manor has ſince paſſed into other families.

this

this misfortune, and that he had recourſe to the King's protection merely to gain time to ſettle his concerns. One may be the more confirmed in this by comparing his circumſtances at this juncture with thoſe of his family ſoon after. We have no direct hiſtorical lights indeed, but methinks though it be a new, it is ſtill a probable conjecture, that about this time he conveyed all his eſtates to his eldeſt ſon Thomas Chaucer; and the facts that ſeem to ſtrengthen this conjecture ſhall be ſubmitted to the reader's judgment at the bottom of the page *.

In

* *At the bottom of the page.*] All who have hitherto attempted to give any account of Chaucer's life have been very much at a loſs about this circumſtance of his having recourſe to the King's protection, which ſhews that in the very beginning of this reign his affairs were in great diſorder; and yet it is very plain that himſelf and his patron flouriſhed in the full poſſeſſion of power and plenty as long as King Edward III. lived. A certain writer hints that Chaucer exhauſted his fortune in his foreign embaſſies; but a later writer obſerves, with greater probability, that he made his fortune by them; yet, as he very juſtly remarks, this by no means ſolves the doubt how he ſhould come to be ſo very poor in ſo ſhort a time, after his poſſeſſing ſo great wealth, for which amongſt others we have his own authority. Now this riddle, I think, may be very probably explained thus. Our Author, Chaucer, about this time found out a very conſiderable match for his eldeſt ſon Thomas Chaucer, and this was Maud, the ſecond daughter of Sir John Burgherſhe, a man of very conſiderable rank, but by no means brother to Sir Bartholomew Burgherſhe,

In the fourth year of King Richard the IId's reign he procured a confirmation of the grants that had been formerly made to himſelf and to Philippa his wife, which is a proof that he had a great perſonal intereſt

Burgherſhe, Knight of the Garter, and of Dr. Henry Burgherſhe, Biſhop of Lincoln, Chancellor and Treaſurer of England, as a certain writer very confidently aſſerts; but rather, if I gueſs right, the nephew of thoſe great men, and the ſon of Sir John Burgherſhe, who was truly their brother: and this I am led to believe, becauſe it appears upon record that the cuſtody of this John Burgherſhe, the father of Maud, was granted in his nonage to the daughter of Sir Bartholomew Burgherſhe before mentioned. A great fortune ſhe was without doubt, but not the only daughter or ſole heireſs of her family, as has been repreſented, or at leaſt not ſo at the time ſhe married Thomas Chaucer, though ſhe might be, and indeed was ſo afterwards. Neither are we to believe what we are told of her being a ward to the crown, for her father was then living, and lived many years after, that is to the 19th of Richard II. when he left behind him two daughters, Margaret the eldeſt, firſt married to Sir John Grenville, Knight, and then to John Arundel, Eſq. and this Maud. Now my ſuppoſition is, that Geoffrey Chaucer, for obtaining this great match, ſettled all his land eſtate upon his ſon, and that his doing this might bring upon him thoſe demands which put him under the neceſſity of obtaining the King's protection. As to the ſeveral facts upon which this conjecture is built, I think they are ſupported by as good authorities as can be deſired; nor can any great difficulty ariſe from the age of this young gentleman, as may appear thus: Chaucer married his wife Philippa Rouet about the year 1360; and if he had this ſon the next year, he might be of full age in the latter end of the

intereſt in this court, ſince at the time of his obtaining this grant the power and influence of the Duke of Lancaſter was very much ſunk, as from a train of ſiniſter accidents waiting upon his conduct he was become equally ſuſpected by the King and diſliked by the people. The great encouragement and ſupport he had afforded to Mr. Wickliffe was attended with conſequences that he did not in the leaſt expect, and yet found it not in his power to hinder; for without doubt the Duke's great view in ſupporting this party was to weaken the power of the clergy, and to hinder them from taking ſo large a ſhare as they did in the management of all temporal affairs: but ſome great men of his party, miſtaking his view, puſhed things to extremities, and, by countenancing itinerant preachers without either learning or ſound principles, made way for a ſudden turn, which had very near ſubverted the conſtitution, and thrown all things into confuſion; for the common people, thus encouraged to ſhake off the yoke of the clergy, began to think that of the government alſo too heavy, and, taking occa-

the fourth year of Richard II. when this marriage took place, and before which in all probability the father might make this ſettlement. We ſhall have occaſion hereafter to ſay more of this gentleman, who became a much greater man than his father, to whom he was a ſupport in his declining years.

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ſion from ſome taxes lately impoſed, roſe up in arms under the conduct of Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and ſuch kind of leaders, with a wild intention of freeing themſelves from whatever theſe wiſe leaders taught them to look upon as oppreſſions. Their reſentment was chiefly directed againſt the clergy, as appears by their beheading the Archbiſhop of Canterbury and the Prior of St. John's by Smithfield, who was Lord Treaſurer, and by their burning that ſtately priory, and plundering the abbies of St. Alban's, Bury, and ſeveral others.

As ſoon as this rebellion was ſomewhat abated, the parliament began to enquire into the cauſe of it; nor were there wanting enemies of Wickliffe, who charged him and his followers with being the encouragers of it: but that is unlikely to be true; for had the rebels been Wickliffe's friends, they would never have burnt the Savoy, the palace of his patron the Duke of Lancaſter. However, ſome of his followers gave too much cauſe for ſuch a ſurmiſe, as Dr. Hereford, who aſſerted that Archbiſhop Sudbury deſerved that death he found; and the King the year following empowered the Biſhops to arreſt Wickliffe, and forbad his ſubjects to encourage any of that perſuaſion; yet Wickliffe appeared, and ſeemed partly to ſatisfy the Biſhops with his opinion.

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It is commonly ſaid by moſt of our hiſtorians, that from this time forward the Duke of Lancaſter diſowned the Wicklivites, and charging the late diſturbances upon them, ſtyled their opinions the doctrine of devils. The writers alſo of our Author's life give into this opinion, and ſeem to think that he likewiſe began to temporize, and did not ſpeak his ſentiments ſo freely as formerly: but the truth is otherwiſe; for the Duke of Lancaſter did not condemn Wickliffe's doctrine, but the doctrines of Dr. Hereford and other followers of Wickliffe, who had now deſerted him, and propagated many dangerous tenets which he diſclaimed. As for Chaucer, he was ſo far from abandoning his former notions, that he exerted himſelf to the utmoſt in 1382, in the ſupport of John Comberton, generally ſtyled John of Northampton, Mayor of London, in his endeavours to reform the city, according to the advice given by Wickliffe; which was ſo much reſented by the clergy, that, rather than they would let this reformation proceed, they had recourſe to the moſt violent methods, and, in order to prevent Comberton's being re-choſen Mayor of London, excited ſuch diſturbances as bordered upon a rebellion. The King making uſe of force upon this occaſion, ſent Sir Robert Knolles to

London, who committed great ſeverities, put ſome to death, made the late Mayor Comberton priſoner, and uſed his utmoſt endeavours to apprehend Chaucer *: but our Author, having an early foreſight of his

* *His utmoſt endeavours to apprehend Chaucer.*] It is very certain that in this whole matter our Author ſuffered for his attachment to his party: but this is ſo darkly repreſented by ſuch as have written his life, that it is a very difficult thing to diſcover their meaning; and yet, after all, the fact is no more than this: there were at that time two powerful factions in the City; and as very ſeldom any thing of this kind happens but religion is drawn into the quarrel, ſo the one was ſuppoſed to be well affected to the church, and the other inclined to a reformation. Dr. Courtney, formerly Biſhop of London, and now Archbiſhop of Canterbury, was protector of the one, and John Duke of Lancaſter was eſteemed to be the head of the other; and the leading man in his intereſt was this John Comberton, or John of Northampton, citizen and draper, on whoſe account all this diſturbance happened, for which ſome lives were loſt; and this unfortunate perſon being carried to Reading, was there tried and convicted, and had judgment given againſt him to be impriſoned for life, and to have his goods ſeized, which we find was accordingly done: and ſo ſtrong the current ran at that time, that he with ſome other citizens of his party were excepted out of a pardon which the King granted; and all this was then underſtood to be done in ſpite and contempt of the Duke of Lancaſter, to whom Comberton ſteadily adhered, and called him *his Lord* at his trial. But, for all this, things came about again not long after, and Mr. Comberton had the honour to have his ſentence reverſed, at the prayer of the Commons of England in parliament aſſembled. We may from all this infer, that how warm and indiſcreet ſoever our Author,

his danger, made his eſcape into Hainault, and from thence went to France, where finding himſelf not ſo ſafe as he expected, he withdrew into Zealand, and there concealed himſelf for ſome time, with ſeveral other Londoners, who had fled upon the ſame account, and whom he generouſly ſubſiſted out of his own private fortune. But while he was in this diſtreſs, moſt of thoſe with whom he had been engaged at home, had found ways and means to make their peace, and, far from conſidering the calamities to which Chaucer had expoſed himſelf for their ſakes,

thor, Chaucer, might be in ſupporting that party to which he had attached himſelf, yet beyond all queſtion there was nothing of diſloyalty in this, but quite the contrary; for thoſe who had then the management of the King's affairs, and run him into all theſe warm and violent meaſures, were the very ſame perſons who by their evil counſels brought him at laſt into that diſtreſſed condition which coſt him firſt his crown, and then his life. It is therefore no diſcredit to Chaucer, that he was a friend to Wickliffe, or that he eſpouſed this party in the City, however ſome of our hiſtorians may have repreſented or rather miſrepreſented it; for it is a thing well enough known to all who are converſant in the Engliſh hiſtory, that many baſe and black calumnies are thrown upon the Duke of Lancaſter and his party, merely on account of their oppoſing the pride and power of the prelates of thoſe times, who, under colour of maintaining the King's prerogative, really ſacrificed him to their own intereſts, which at the ſame time alſo they very ill underſtood, ſince a reaſonable compliance had both ſaved him and done themſelves much more good.

took no care to ſupply him, and, which was much worſe, endeavoured to hinder the remittances that might have been made him out of his own fortune, and this in hopes that he might periſh in his baniſhment, and by his death put them out of all fear. Such baſe and barbarous ingratitude, though it extremely afflicted him, yet it did not put our Author upon taking any meaſures to be revenged: on the contrary, he came over privately into England, to avoid ſtarving in a ſtrange country; but had not been long here before, either through the vigilance of the government's enquiries, or the treachery of ſome whom he truſted, he was diſcovered, ſeized, and ſent to priſon, where he was treated at firſt with great rigour and ſeverity, but in the end promiſed the King's pardon and his liberty, if he would diſcloſe all he knew, and put it in the power of the government to reſtore the peace of the City, which at length he did. It does not appear what the conſequences were of his confeſſion with reſpect to others; but with regard to himſelf, they brought upon him an inexpreſſible load of calumnies and ſlanders. All theſe circumſtances we learn from himſelf, in that moſt excellent treatiſe of his, entitled The Teſtament of Love, which he wrote on purpoſe to vent his ſorrow, and to conſole himſelf under

der the heavy burden of his afflictions. This load, which was already almoſt too heavy for him, received however ſome very conſiderable additions from the concurrence of other untoward accidents, ſuch as the Duke of Lancaſter's loſing much of his credit at court, and Chaucer not a little of his intereſt with the Duke, who finding his reputation very much injured by the liberties taken with his character, on account of his amours with the Lady Swynford, he came, though very unwillingly, to a full reſolution of parting with her, which he accordingly did; and this for a time affected the concerns of our Author extremely, who finding himſelf ſtrongly puſhed on one ſide by ſuch as meant him ill, and little if at all ſupported on the other by ſuch as had been formerly his friends, was ſo much depreſſed thereby in his mind, and diſtreſſed in his fortune, as to reſolve upon diſpoſing of his penſions before mentioned, which he had obtained in the former, and had been confirmed to him in the preſent reign; and this he actually did to one John Scalby, as appears by a licenſe obtained for this purpoſe on record. In this unexpected and terrible reverſe of fortune, he very wiſely reſolved to quit that buſy ſcene of life in which he had met with ſo many troubles, and to ſeek in re-

tirement that happineſs which from experience he knew was not to be met with in courts. The place he choſe for his retreat was Woodſtock, which had been the ſweet ſcene of ſo much ſatisfaction to him in the days of his proſperity; and there he employed part of his time in reviſing and correcting his writings, totally ſecluded from the world, and taſting only thoſe calm and ſolid pleaſures which are the reſult of a wiſe man's reflections on the viciſſitudes of human life. By this means he became well prepared for a new alteration in his condition, and as unexpected a change in his affairs as he had hitherto met with; for the abſence of the great Duke of Lancaſter, which had coſt him ſo dear, gave him the better title to hope his favour and his protection upon his return, which happened towards the end of the year 1389. He had made an expedition into Spain, in order to recover the kingdoms of Caſtile and Leon, of which in right of his wife he had aſſumed the title; and, though his ſucceſs in war was at firſt various, and at laſt diſaſtrous, yet ſo wiſe and prudent a prince he was, that, after diſmiſſing his army and ſeeming to relinquiſh that great deſign, for the accompliſhment of which he had ſpent ſo much, he had, notwithſtanding, ſo great addreſs as to be able to extract even from

from his diſappointment, almoſt as much as he could have expected from victory: for though he could not make himſelf a king, yet he made two of his daughters queens, one of Caſtile, and the other of Portugal; bringing home with him alſo a vaſt treaſure in ready money, having at the time he landed in England, as one of our hiſtorians tells us, as many cheſts of gold as loaded forty-ſeven mules. Upon his return, in ſo good circumſtances, his party began to revive, and the Duke recovered his credit at court, inſomuch that the King in full parliament created him Duke of Aquitaine, and ſent him over to take poſſeſſion of that noble principality. His old affection for the Lady Catharine Swynford, ſiſter to Chaucer's wife, revived with his fortune; and, under colour of rewarding the care ſhe had taken in the education of his daughters, he made her very large grants in the nature of penſions*. We have no particular account

* *He made her very large grants in the nature of penſions.*] The colour given by the Duke of Lancaſter to theſe grants made in favour of the Lady Swynford, was the care ſhe had taken of his two daughters, Philippa and Elizabeth, as appears by the words of the grant of the wardſhip of Bertram de Sanbys's heir, and of an annuity of two hundred marks *per annum*, payable out of his honour of Tickhill, which words are theſe: "For the "good and agreeable ſervice which our thrice dear and moſt be-

count of the benefits that accrued to Chaucer from this turn in the Duke's affairs; but, notwithſtanding this, we have no reaſon to doubt that he felt the effects of his patron's proſperity, who had ſuffered ſo deeply by the declenſion of his influence. But it ſeems his diſtaſte to courts was grown ſo ſtrong, that nothing could tempt him to quit his rural retirement, or to launch again into that ſea of buſineſs where he

" loved Lady Catharine Swynford, the miſtreſs of our moſt be-
" loved daughters, hath rendered to our ſaid children, we have
" given and granted, &c." But no doubt the true reaſon was for his ſpecial affection towards her on account of the children he had had by her, to whom he gave the name of Beaufort, in Latin *de bello forte*, from a caſtle ſo called in Anjou, which came into his family by the Lady Blanch of Artois, Queen of Navarre. Theſe children were four, viz. John Beaufort, afterwards Earl of Somerſet; Henry Beaufort, afterwards Cardinal Biſhop of Wincheſter and Chancellor of England; Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Dorſet, afterwards Duke of Exeter; and Joan, firſt married to Sir Robert Ferrers of Overſly, and afterwards to Ralph Earl of Weſtmoreland. We have mentioned this more particularly, becauſe of the near relation between the deſcendants of our Author and thoſe of this lady by the Duke of Lancaſter, of which we find it remembered by a very curious and circumſpect writer in the time of King Charles I. that there had been eight kings, four queens, and five princes, of England; ſix kings and three queens of Scotland; two cardinals, upwards of twenty dukes, almoſt as many ducheſſes of England, ſeveral dukes of Scotland, beſides many potent princes and eminent nobility in foreign parts.

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had been ſo lately ſhipwrecked. His mind however being more at reſt, he undertook and finiſhed a new work, which has eſtabliſhed his reputation with reſpect to learning, upon as firm a baſis as his former labours had fixed his fame for wit and genius. This new work plainly appears to be wrote in the year 1391, and was intended for the uſe of his younger ſon Lewis, then no more than ten years of age, and yet ſo forward in his learning, as to be deſirous of having his father's inſtructions in acquiring the principles of aſtronomy. This gave birth to his Treatiſe on the Aſtrolabe, which not only ſhews the ſkill of its author, but likewiſe inconteſtably proves uſeful ſcience was not at near ſo low an ebb in thoſe times as it is generally repreſented. Neither will the caſe be at all altered, if what ſome writers have ſuggeſted ſhould really prove true, and this Diſcourſe of Chaucer's appear to be no more than a tranſlation, or, which ſeems to be ſtill a more probable opinion, a collection from other authors who had written before him upon the ſame ſubject.

About four years after this, while her huſband was in France, Conſtance Ducheſs of Lancaſter died, and was buried with great ſolemnity at Leiceſter; and the Duke coming over into England at the cloſe of

of the year, and not meeting with quite ſo kind a reception at court as he expected, went ſuddenly to Lincoln, where his old miſtreſs, Lady Catharine Swynford, reſided, and, to the great ſurpriſe of the world, now when ſhe had not either youth or beauty to recommend her, married her. This gave great diſcontent to the Ducheſs of Glouceſter, the Counteſs of Derby, the Counteſs of Arundel, and other ladies deſcended of the royal family, becauſe ſhe became by this marriage the ſecond perſon in the realm, and from being no fit companion for any, was now ſuddenly to take place of them all: but ſhe behaved with ſo much diſcretion and humility, that theſe diſputes were quickly compoſed, and in a ſhort time ſhe gained ſuch an aſcendency over the king, that he carried her, as well as the Duke her huſband, with him, the year after their marriage, into France, at which time he eſpouſed Iſabel, the French King's daughter, then very young, and who was put under the care of the Ducheſs of Lancaſter.

After the ceremony of this marriage, and the return of the royal family to England, we find a very ſingular inſtance of the advantage that Chaucer received from this alliance; for now, by letters patent, the King granted him an annuity of twenty marks

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per annum, in lieu of that given him by his grandfather, and which in the time of his diſtreſs he had been compelled to diſpoſe of for his ſubſiſtence. Soon after this he granted him his protection by other letters patent, dated the 4th of May, in the 21ſt year of his reign, for two years, ſignifying that for that ſpace he had occaſion to employ him in his ſervice. Neither was this the laſt or greateſt inſtance afforded him of royal favour; ſince we find that, by letters patent, dated the 13th of October in the following year, he had a pipe of wine annually granted out of the Cuſtoms of the port of London, which was to be delivered him by the Chief Butler, and to this office his ſon Thomas Chaucer was now raiſed.

But if theſe benefits cheered and comforted his decayed ſpirits in the decline of life, he had however the mortification to loſe about the ſame time his noble patron, his conſtant friend, and kind brother, the Duke of Lancaſter, by whom he was firſt brought to court, and through whoſe favour he never wanted either countenance or ſupport, when it was in his power to beſtow. This loſs very probably afflicted him deeply, as we may gather from his retiring about this time to Dunnington-Caſtle, where he ſpent moſt of his days during the laſt two years of his life, indulging his

his grave thoughts in the ſolitude of that ſweet retreat *. In

* *Of that ſweet retreat.*] It is not very clear at what time our Author quitted his beloved houſe at Woodſtock, in order to go to Dunnington-Caſtle, where he ſpent the laſt two years of his life; but as this was his final retreat, and became very remarkable for being ſo, an account of it cannot be unacceptable to the reader. It was in Mr. Camden's time, (when in its glory) "a "ſmall but neat caſtle, ſituate upon the brow of a riſing hill, "having an agreeable proſpect, very light, with windows on all "ſides, ſaid to be built by Sir Richard Adderbury, Knight, "who likewiſe founded an hoſpital beneath it, called God's "Houſe: it was afterwards the ſeat of Chaucer, then of the "De la Poles, and in our fathers' memory the dwelling of "Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk." At the beginning of the rebellion in the reign of King Charles I. it was a garriſon for the King under the valiant Sir John Boys, which commanded the weſtern road and town of Newbury, and was therefore of great advantage to the royal party as a ſafe retreat; and the cannon playing from it much annoyed the parliament forces. This place his Majeſty honoured by lying one night in it; but after a rough aſſault and as bold a reſiſtance, during which ſeveral of the towers were battered down, it was ſurrendered upon honourable conditions. This was the ancient ſtate and the occaſion of the late ruin of that pleaſant ſtructure. At preſent there is nothing to be ſeen of it, but what raiſes horror and concern, a battered gateway with two towers, and ſome ſmall part of the ſhattered walls, being all that remains thereof. The ground about it and the ruins of it are choaked with brambles, and over-run with ivy; but left the place of its ſituation ſhould in a few years more be forgot, I ſhall as plainly as I can deſcribe it. It lies half a mile to the right of Spinhamland (the ancient Spina of Antoninus), a mile beyond Newbury, on the ſame ſide. As you go from London,

In this ſituation he was when that great revolution happened, which placed Henry of Lancaſter, the ſon of his brother-in-law, upon the throne, in which as Chaucer had no hand, (though certainly it could not diſpleaſe him), ſo we do not find that he was at all eager in paying his compliments to the new King, much leſs that he triumphed in the misfortunes of his late kind maſter and gracious benefactor, as others, and particularly Gower, who had been more obliged to that unfortunate prince, and who at that time was both old and blind, moſt ſhamefully did. He did not however ſlight the advantages offered him by this revolution; but having accidentally loſt the two laſt grants of an annuity, and of the pipe of wine by King Richard, he obtained a confirmation

don, you paſs over the river Kennet to the village of Dunnington, from which there is a pretty ſteep but pleaſant aſcent through a lane to a hill under the Caſtle, where ſtands a ſeat formerly belonging to the Counteſs of Sandwich: from hence ariſes the Caſtle-hill very ſteep, and not unlike that whereon the Obſervatory ſtands at Greenwich, and from this hill there is a very fine proſpect of ſeveral counties. On the back of the Caſtle are level grounds, woodlands, and encloſures. The Caſtle itſelf ſtands in a pleaſant park, in which there was a famous oak, called Chaucer's Oak, under which, as tradition taught, he wrote ſeveral poems. Mr. Evelyn gives a particular account of this tree, and ſays there were three of them planted by Chaucer, the King's oak, the Queen's oak, and Chaucer's oak.

of

of them in the 1ſt year of Henry IV. by an exemplification of his former letters patent. Neither was this the only favour he received from the new king, who, out of regard to the ancient friendſhip and near alliance between the prince his father and our Author, granted him, during the 1ſt year of his reign, an annuity of forty marks *per annum* for the term of his life. It is true indeed, that a very great writer, a ſincere admirer of our Author, and moſt deſervedly a poet-laureate himſelf, informs us that Chaucer enjoyed this honour under three kings, Edward III. Richard II. and Henry IV.: but this is a miſtake; for in truth there was no ſuch office in thoſe days, or, if we may truſt to the authority of the learned Selden, before the reign of Edward IV. If we take this in a more extenſive ſenſe, for an eminent poet who celebrated theſe princes, it may be juſtly applied to Chaucer in regard to the two firſt; but we find nothing in his Works relating to the laſt, nor indeed is his name ſo much as mentioned in any of our Author's writings.

The ſmall time he lived after the acceſſion of this king was chiefly employed in regulating his private affairs, which had ſuffered by the publick diſorders; for all the publick acts of the depoſed King Richard in the

21ſt

21ſt year of his reign being declared void, Chaucer was forced to quit his retirement to come up to Town, to ſolicit his cauſes; and beginning now to bend under the weight of years, this unlucky acceſſion of buſineſs, which obliged him to alter his uſual way of living, might very poſſibly haſten his end, the near approach of which he bore with Roman conſtancy, or rather with Chriſtian patience; for there is ſtill extant a kind of ode that he is ſaid to have compoſed in his laſt agonies, which very plainly proves that his ſenſes were perfectly ſound, and the faculties of his mind not in the leaſt impaired *. He died October 25th, 1400, in the full poſſeſſion of that high reputation which his writings had deſervedly acquired; and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey, in the great ſouth-croſs iſle. Some writers have affirmed that he was firſt buried in the cloiſter, and lay there till ſome years after: but this is a miſtake; for Caxton, in his edition of Chaucer (which was long before the time of his removal as they place it), ſays that he was buried in the Abbey-church of Weſtminſter, before the chapel of St. Bennet. And it is very

* *And the faculties of his mind not in the leaſt impaired.*] This ſonnet or ode conſiſts of no more than three ſtanzas: it is that entitled *Gode Counſaile of Chaucer.*

probable

probable he lay beneath a large ſtone of grey marble in the pavement, where the monument of Mr. Dryden now ſtands, which is in the front of that chapel, upon the erecting of which this ſtone was taken up and ſawed in pieces, to make good the pavement; at leaſt this ſeems beſt to anſwer the deſcription of the place given by Caxton. As to the alterations that have happened ſince, and the inſcriptions now viſible on his tomb, an account will be given in the notes *.

* *In the notes.*] We are told by Speght and other authors, that the following lines ſtood anciently upon Chaucer's tombſtone:

Galfridus Chaucer, vates et fama poeſis
Maternæ hac ſacra ſum tumulatus humo.

This anciently muſt refer only to the time of Caxton, who procured a long epitaph to be written in honour of our Author by Stephanus Surigonius, Poet-Laureate of Milan, which was hung upon a pillar over-againſt Chaucer's graveſtone; towards the end of which epitaph theſe two lines occur. But about the year 1555, as a very exact author reports, or in 1556, as Wood will have it, Mr. Nicholas Brigham, a gentleman of Oxford, who exerciſed his Muſe much in poetry, and took great delight in Chaucer's Works, and honoured his memory, at his own charge erected a handſome monument for him not far from the ſaid chapel; for in the ſame place he could not then conveniently erect it, by reaſon of the cancelli, which the late Duke of Buckingham obtained leave to remove, to make room for Mr. Dryden's tomb. Upon that monument Mr. Brigham cauſed Chaucer's picture to be painted, from that which was in Occleve's book, together with the following inſcription, which ſtill remains:

M. S.

We may juſtly affirm of this great man, that, in whatever light he is conſidered, he ſeems always to merit

M. S.

Qui fuit Anglorum vates ter maximus olim,
Galfridus Chaucer, conditur hoc tumulo:
Annum ſi quæras Domini, ſi tempora vitæ,
Ecce notæ ſubſunt quæ tibi cuncta notant.
25 Octobris 1400.

Ærumnarum requies mors.
N. Brigham hos fecit Muſarum nomine ſumptus.
1556.

In Engliſh thus.

Of Engliſh bards who ſang the ſweeteſt ſtrains
Old Geoffrey Chaucer now this tomb contains:
For his death's date if, reader, thou ſhould'ſt call,
Look but beneath, and it will tell thee all.
25th October, 1400.

Of cruel cares the certain cure is death.

N. Brigham placed theſe, in the name of the Muſes, at his own expenſe, 1556.

About the ledge of the tomb we are told the following verſes were written, that are now worn out: but it is more probable that they were inſcribed upon a ledge of braſs that is taken away; for there is not the leaſt ſign of any letters upon the ſtone itſelf:

Si rogites quis eram, forſan te Fama docebit;
Quod ſi fama negat, mundi quia gloria tranſit,
Hæc monumenta lege.

If who I was you aſk, Fame ſhall declare;
If Fame denies, ſince frail all glories are,
Theſe ſtones ſhall ſpeak, inſcrib'd with pious care.

merit our eſteem, as well as to claim our admiration. In his publick character, if we conſider the time in which he lived, we muſt acknowledge that he ſhewed as great ſteadineſs, and adhered as firmly to his principles, as could be expected; and as to his gratitude towards and affection for his patron, the great Duke of Lancaſter, it ſtands in no need of apology. His conduct in the laſt part of his life was full of prudence and that calm contempt for an ungrateful world, which though it is eaſy for a man of parts to conceive, yet to perſiſt in it is a very difficult taſk. In private life he was a fine gentleman, a learned writer, and an agreeable companion. In his youth he was gay, and loved pleaſure; for which he might not only plead the uſual excuſes of his age and conſti-

It may not be amiſs to obſerve, that this date of his death is preſerved by ſeveral writers, who alſo inform us, that he was then ſeventy-two. Some indeed have queſtioned it, becauſe of a piece, entitled Cupid's Letter, printed with Chaucer's Works, and dated in 1402; but that was written by Thomas Occleve, his ſcholar, and was intended to do honour to his Works and memory. The Rev. Mr. Collier fixes his death in 1440, which was the 19th of Henry VI. and if ſo, Chaucer was but ten years old at the death of King Edward III. which contradicts all the records, and is in every reſpect a moſt glaring abſurdity; whereas the other date agrees with them exactly, and therefore there can be no doubt of its truth.

tution,

tution, but the cuſtom alſo of the times, ſince he lived in the moſt gallant reign from the Conqueſt. But in his maturer ſtate of life his manners altered, and his behaviour was modeſt and grave to a degree of exceſs, for which he was rallied by his patroneſs, the Counteſs of Pembroke, who told him his abſence created more mirth than his converſation; for he was very baſhful and reſerved in company, notwithſtanding that life and ſpirit which appears in his writings. If we look upon him as an author, he may be truly ſtyled the Father of Engliſh Poetry, and perhaps the Prince of it; for, except the unavoidable defects of language, his Works have ſtill all the beauties that can be wiſhed for or expected in every kind of compoſition. He was not unacquainted with the ancient rules of poetry, nor was he incapable of writing up to them, as very clearly appears by The Knight's Tale, which, as Mr. Dryden very juſtly ſays, is a finiſhed epick poem: but he did not always judge this exactneſs neceſſary, and perhaps he thought his genius ſet him above thoſe reſtraints that ought to limit, becauſe they improve, the works of meaner poets. He was deeply verſed in moral and in natural philoſophy; and as perhaps no man underſtood human nature better, ſo it may be truly ſaid,

that no writer in any language has either painted it with greater force, exactneſs, or judgment. His reading was deep and extenſive, and his learning both ſpecious and ſolid; for he knew how to expoſe thoſe parts of it to view, that are moſt apt to attract publick applauſe, and yet leave a ſenſe concealed, that might at once employ and ſatisfy the moſt inquiſitive underſtandings. It would draw this article into too great a length, ſhould we perſiſt in exhibiting every part of his accompliſhed character; and therefore we will in the notes give the beſt account we may of his merit in general as a poet, in all the different kinds of writing by which he diſtinguiſhed himſelf in that capacity *: and next we will give the reader the

* *By which he diſtinguiſhed himſelf in that capacity.*] We may ſafely affirm that of Chaucer, which can be hardly ſaid of any other general poet, ancient or modern, that he excelled in all the different kinds of verſe in which he wrote. In his ſonnets or love-ſongs, when he was but a very boy, there is not only fire and judgment, but great elegance of thought, and neatneſs of compoſure. It is very true, that he did not always ſtand upon his own ground, but choſe rather to tranſlate from the Italian or French; yet he choſe his authors judiciouſly, and uſed them freely; ſo that this, inſtead of ſinking, ſerves really to heighten his character. That in the elegiack poetry he was a complete maſter, appears plainly by his Complaint of the Black Knight, the poem called La belle Dame ſans Mercy, and ſeveral of his ſongs.

the cleareſt account we may of his largeſt work, peculiar in its kind; and as it was almoſt without example, ſo

ſongs. He was an excellent maſter of love poetry, having ſtudied that paſſion in all its turns and appearances; and Mr. Dryden prefers him upon that account to Ovid. His Troilus and Creſeide is one of the moſt beautiful poems of that kind, in which love is curiouſly and naturally deſcribed in its early appearance, its hopes and fears, its application, fruition, and deſpair in diſappointment. How great a maſter he was in ſatire, we ſhall have occaſion to ſhew in the next note; but his great proficiency in this did not at all hinder his diſcharging himſelf moſt happily in a far more difficult way of writing, that of panegyrick. The praiſes of Chaucer are eaſy, natural, and delicate, ſuch as muſt give equal pleaſure to the perſon commended and to the peruſer, and have always the true air of a courtier, without the meanneſs of a flatterer. His moral poems are grave and weighty, full of good ſenſe and of fine ſentiments. In a word, he deſerves all that is ſaid of him by Mr. Dryden, who was ſcarce a better poet than a critick; let us hear him then a little upon this ſubject. "As he is the father of Engliſh poetry, ſo I hold him in "the ſame degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or "the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good ſenſe, "learned in all ſciences, and therefore ſpeaks properly on all "ſubjects: as he knew what to ſay, ſo he knows alſo when to "leave off; a continence which is practiſed by few writers, and "ſcarcely by any of the Ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. "Chaucer followed Nature every where, but was never ſo bold "as to go beyond her: and there is as great difference of being "*poëta et nimis poëta*, if we may believe Catullus, as much as "betwixt a modeſt behaviour and affectation. The verſe of "Chaucer I confeſs is not harmonious to us; but it is like "the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auri-*

ſo hitherto above the reach of imitation—I mean his Canterbury Tales *.

We

" *bus iſtius temporis accommodata.* They who lived with him, " and ſome time after him, thought it muſical, and it continues ſo " even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lyd- " gate and Gower, his contemporaries. There is the rude " ſweetneſs of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleaſing, " though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go ſo far as he who " publiſhed the laſt edition of him; for he would make us believe " the fault is in our ears, and that there are really ten ſyllables in " a verſe where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth " confuting; it is ſo groſs and obvious an error, that common " ſenſe (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and " revelation) muſt convince the reader that equality of numbers " in every verſe which we call heroick was either not known or " not always practiſed in Chaucer's age: it were an eaſy matter " to produce ſome thouſands of his verſes which are lame for " want of half a foot, and ſometimes a whole one, and which " no pronunciation can make oth e rwiſ We can only ſay that " he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is " brought to perfection at the firſt. We muſt be children before " we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in proceſs of time " a Lucilius and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even " after Chaucer there was a Spenſer, a Harrington, a Fairfax, " before Waller and Denham were in being; and our numbers " were in their nonage till theſe laſt appeared."

* *I mean his Canterbury Tales.*] The ſcheme of this work is in every reſpect very extraordinary, and of ſo vaſt an extent, that at firſt ſight one would be apt to pronounce it abſolutely impracticable, from a perſuaſion that it muſt ſurpaſs the powers of any ſingle mind to paint the different lineaments, and call out to view the various faculties, of every mind. The truth as well as the

We have already, in the courſe of his memoirs, ſpoken of moſt of his patrons, who were the greateſt as

the meaning of this ſentiment will beſt appear from a ſhort repreſentation of the Author's deſign, which is this: Chaucer pretends, that intending to pay his devotions to the ſhrine of Thomas à Becket, he ſet up his horſe at the Tabard-inn in Southwark, that he found in the inn a number of pilgrims, who ſeverally propoſed the ſame journey, and that they all agreed to ſup together, and to ſet out the next morning on the ſame party. The ſupper being finiſhed, the landlord, a fellow of ſenſe and drollery, conformable to his character and calling, makes them no diſagreeable propoſal, that, to divert them on their journey, each of them ſhould be obliged to tell two ſtories, one going, the other coming back; and that whoever in the judgment of the company ſhould ſucceed beſt in this art of tale-telling, by way of recompence, at their return to his inn, ſhould be entitled to a good ſupper at the common coſt; which propoſal aſſented to, he promiſes to be their governor and guide. At the entrance of the poem, the characters of all the pilgrims are diſtinctly drawn, and a plan of the comedy, in which they ſtand for the *Dramatis Perſonæ*. Beſides this, every Tale has its Prologue, and a kind of Epilogue too, which ſerves by way of tranſition to the next; and to the honour of our Author be it ſpoken, ſo far as his plan is executed, every part of it is performed with equal juſtice and ſpirit; and above all the character of the Hoſt, who acts as a kind of Chorus in the ancient drama, is moſt admirably kept up, and the ſame wit, ſpirit, and humour, is preſerved through the whole journey, that ſtrikes and aſtoniſhes the reader ſo much at the very beginning, where the original character of this incomparable perſon is drawn at full length. A ſtronger argument in ſupport of this character of The Canterbury Tales cannot well be brought than ariſes from the autho-

as well as ableſt men of thoſe times. The circle of his friends was alſo very large; and his communicative

rity of three great poets, who have judged them worthy of imitation and revival; I mean Spenſer, Dryden, and Pope; to whom we may add Mr. Betterton, who tranſlated many of the characters of Chaucer, and muſt have been allowed to have been as fit a judge of them as any of the foregoing. But the reader will receive the fulleſt ſatisfaction on this head, from the critical remarks of Mr. Dryden, who as he perfectly underſtood, ſo he has very freely given us his ſentiments on this maſterpiece of our Author's. "He muſt," ſays he, "have been a man of a moſt "wonderful comprehenſive nature, becauſe, as it has been truly "obſerved of him, he has taken into the compaſs of his Canter- "bury Tales, the various manners and humours, as we now call "them, of the whole Engliſh nation in his age: not a ſingle cha- "racter has eſcaped him. All his pilgrims are ſeverally diſtin- "guiſhed from each other, and not only in their inclinations, but "in their very phyſiognomies and perſons. Baptiſta Porta could "not have deſcribed their natures better than by the marks which "the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their "Tales, and of their telling, are ſo ſuited to their different "educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would "be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and ſerious "characters are diſtinguiſhed by their ſeveral ſorts of gravity; "their diſcourſes are ſuch as belong to their age, their calling, "and their breeding; ſuch as are becoming of them, and of "them only. Some of his perſons are vicious, and ſome virtu- "ous; ſome are unlearned, or, as Chaucer calls them, lewd, and "ſome are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is "different; the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are ſeveral "men, and diſtinguiſhed from each other as much as the min- "cing Lady Prioreſs and the broad-ſpeaking gap-toothed Wife "of

diſpoſition made him as much beloved by his :emporaries, as he was admired both by them and poſterity. He appears to have been uſeful to ı in every manner that was in his power; and it this diſpoſition, in all probability, that kept them rm to his intereſt while he was living, and taught ı to have ſo high a reſpect for his memory after

Bath. But enough of this; there is ſuch a variety of game inging up before me, that I am diſtracted in my choice, and rw not which to follow. It is ſufficient to ſay, according he proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our fore- ıers and great-grandams all before us as they were in Chau- s days; their general characters are ſtill remaining in man- d, and even in England, though they are called by other ıes than thoſe of Monks and Friars, of Chanons, and ty-Abbeſſes, and Nuns; for mankind is ever the ſame, and ning loſt out of nature, though every thing is altered. :cace lived in the ſame age with Chaucer, had the ſame ge- s, and followed the ſame ſtudies; both writ novels, and ı of them cultivated his mother tongue. In the ſerious : of poetry, the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's ſide; for ıgh the Engliſhman has borrowed many tales from the Ita- , yet it appears, that thoſe of Boccace were not generally of own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and him only modelled, ſo that what was of invention in er of them may be judged equal. But Chaucer has re- d on Boccace, and has mended the ſtories which he has owed in his way of telling, though proſe allows more li- y of thought, and the expreſſion is more eaſy when uncon- d by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet s the race at diſadvantage."

his

his deceaſe. It is no difficult thing to compile a liſt of them from his writings, in which he has mentioned them with all the marks of kindneſs and eſteem poſſible, a circumſtance favourable to himſelf and to them; for in this poets have the advantage even of princes: the latter, how great ſoever, can confer only temporary benefits; but the former can beſtow immortality; and therefore princes themſelves have courted, not perhaps without political reaſons, the good will of theſe favourites of the Muſes: but we are apt to ſuſpect their praiſes when applied to their patrons of high rank, more than their commendations of private friends; the former is commonly dictated by the head, whereas the latter flows from the heart; and this conſideration alone makes it reaſonable that we ſhould inſiſt more particularly on thoſe whom our Author has thus conſigned to fame: but, in order to ſpare the reader's time, we ſhall mention only a very few of Chaucer's intimate friends and contemporaries at the bottom of the page *.

That

* *At the bottom of the page.*] Amongſt the earlieſt of Chaucer's friends, and alſo directors of his ſtudies, were Nicholas of Lynne and John Some, both Carmelite monks, and extremely well verſed in mathematical ſciences, the former more eſpecially, who left behind him ſeveral learned books, and is commended by Leland,

That general applauſe with which his writings were received in his lifetime, and the high honours that

Leland, as having excelled in aſtronomy all that went before him. We have before mentioned Ralph Strode, who was both a celebrated poet and philoſopher, of Merton-College in Oxford, where it ſeems our Author was intimately acquainted with him, and had a great veneration for his abilities. It is a ſtrange error, which the author of the Life of Chaucer prefixed to Mr. Urry's edition has fallen into with regard to Strode, who, he ſays, was a great follower of Wickliffe; which is ſo far from being true, that he was one of the warmeſt writers againſt him, for which he is heavily cenſured by Bale, and as highly commended by Pitts. It is very probable, that Wickliffe and Chaucer were very good friends, as they both owed the eminence of their reſpective ſtations to the ſame patron, John Duke of Lancaſter. Sir John Gower, an eminent lawyer, poet, and philoſopher, was alſo Chaucer's intimate companion, as appears from both their writings. The former was blind before the latter died, and ſurvived him only two years. But Thomas Occleve, or Hockliffe, a very ingenious man, and a celebrated writer, was a great favourite of our Author's, and imitated him in his manner of writing. We are indebted to him for preſerving Chaucer's picture, which he cauſed to be drawn, in his book *De Regimine Principis*, and which he dedicated to King Henry V.; and it is very evident, from the verſes which refer to that picture, that Chaucer had been a long time dead before he compoſed that work. Another ſcholar of his was the famous John Lydgate, a monk of Bury, who celebrates our Author's memory and writings in many of his pieces, and who outlived him forty years. Schogan alſo, who diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his ſarcaſtical wit, was a profeſſed admirer and imitator of Chaucer; but, as Leland obſerves, if Chaucer, who ſometimes ſtyles Gower his maſter, excelled

that were paid him by ſuch as took a pride in ſtyling themſelves hīs diſciples after his death, ſtamped ſuch a mark of authority upon his Works, as ſaved at leaſt the greateſt part of them from that oblivion which has covered the performances even of the moſt celebrated authors of his time. In ſpite of that ſpirit of envy which his free and ſevere ſatires excited in the clergy, in ſpite of his own Retraction (whether genuine or fictitious is uncertain), in ſpite of that authority which the church afterwards acquired, not of cenſuring only, but of condemning and prohibiting what books they pleaſed, his writings have eſcaped, and not barely eſcaped, but have been held in the greateſt honour, and tranſmitted to poſterity with ſuch care and circumſpection, and by the united labours of ſo many eminent perſons, as will do laſting honour to his memory, and plainly prove that true genius, extenſive learning, and a free ſpirit, are ca-

celled him in the ſpirit and elegance of his verſes, Schogan, who acknowledged Chaucer for his maſter, was ſo far from doing the like, that he fell much below him. Yet ſuch in all ages has been the proneneſs of mankind to encourage even the coarſeſt kind of ſatire, that Schogan wanted not his admirers, how little ſoever he reſembled Chaucer. It is believed, that he was perſonally acquainted with the celebrated Petrarch; but that he was perfectly maſter of his writings, and thoſe of Boccace, is inconteſtable.

pable

pable of commanding reverence through all ages, and preſerving that tranſcendent eſteem which is and ought to be the peculiar reward of ſuperior merit *.

We

* *And ought to be the peculiar reward of ſuperior merit.*] It muſt be allowed by all who are proper judges, that the excellence attributed to Chaucer's writings by ſuch poets as came neareſt his own times, did not ariſe in any degree either from cuſtom or complaiſance, but, on the contrary, was equally well founded in reaſon and on matter of fact; ſo that, if we examine the ſentiments, we ſhall find them more noble, ſhall diſcover a greater compaſs in his learning, and above all an harmonious ſweetneſs in his verſe, far beyond any thing that is to be met with in any poetical compoſitions for a whole century after his time. This is very candidly acknowledged by a ſtranger, who had as good a right as any to diſpute it---I mean that excellent old poet of Scotland, Gawin Douglas Biſhop of Dunkeld. Indeed Chaucer's reputation was as well eſtabliſhed in Scotland as in England; and I will take upon me to ſay that he was as much the Father of Poetry in that country as in this. It would render this note tedious to attempt giving a detail of the ſeveral printed editions of our Author's Works; it will be ſufficient to refer the reader to the contents of this vol. where this may be found. Caxton, the Father of Engliſh Printers, firſt printed many of Chaucer's Works, and printed them ſeveral times. In the reign of Hen. VIII. William Botteville, *alias* Thynne, Eſq. was the editor of a new edition of Chaucer, which in a very elegant diſcourſe he addreſſed to King Hen. VIII. In the ſame reign the induſtrious and learned Leland was a ſtudious reader and a moſt zealous admirer of the Works of Chaucer, in whoſe honour he wrote not one only, but three copies of commendatory verſes. The ſame tribute of praiſe was beſtowed upon our Author

We are not however to ſuppoſe that with all theſe great qualifications Chaucer could entirely eſcape the fury of falſe criticks; neither would it have been very

thor by that excellent writer and great judge of elegance in all kind of writing, Roger Aſcham; to whom we may add Sir Philip Sidney, who very judiciouſly obſerves, that it was equally ſtrange to him that Chaucer ſhould ſee ſo clearly in ſo miſty a time, and that in brighter ages men ſhould go ſo ſtumblingly after him. About this time Mr. Speght, by the aſſiſtance of the induſtrious John Stowe, publiſhed a new edition of our Author's Works, which were dedicated to Sir Robert Cecil, afterwards Earl of Saliſbury; and another ſtill more complete edition was promiſed by Mr. Francis Thynne, which never appeared. We have mentioned the commendations given him by the laborious John Fox, and the moſt learned Camden: we muſt add to theſe the numerous teſtimonies of the immortal Spenſer, and the judicious apology of the ſuppoſed levities in Chaucer's Works, by Mr. Francis Beaumont. The celebrated Sir Henry Savile mentions him with the higheſt reſpect; and the great Mr. Selden has given us a noble ſpecimen of that profound learning of which he was maſter, in juſtifying an epithet of our Author's. Sir Francis Kynaſton, of Otely in Shropſhire, publiſhed the firſt and ſecond books of a Latin verſion of Troilus and Creſeide, and completed his tranſlation of and notes upon the other three; and, from ſome ſpecimens that are extant in the Gloſſary at the end of Mr. Urry's edition, the world may well perceive how valuable a performance we are deprived of by the loſs or concealment of his manuſcript. It would be needleſs to ſwell this note with other particulars; but if ſome able hand would reſume the deſign of the late ingenious Mr. Ogle, and give us his Canterbury Tales in modern Engliſh, with a proper body of notes, there is no doubt that it would meet with a favourable reception.

much

much perhaps to his honour if he had, inaſmuch as all great poets, ancient and modern, have been ſo generally infeſted by theſe cavillers, that they ſeem to be the neceſſary attendants of an exalted reputation, and, like the ſlaves in a Roman triumph, make unwillingly an addition to that glory they meant to ſhade. Thoſe who have attacked Chaucer, have not preſumed to queſtion his wit, for of this perhaps no writer of our nation ever had more; neither have they diſputed his poetical abilities, which certainly ſet his on a level with the greateſt names in antiquity; nor have they dared to throw any aſperſion on his learning, the extent of which is not greater than the maſterly degree of propriety with which it is every where applied: but the point to which they object is his changing, debaſing, or corrupting our language, by introducing foreign words, as if the worth of all languages did not ariſe from their being thus enlarged and compounded, or as if Chaucer could have hurt the jargon of his time, which was not either Saxon, Norman, or French, but a mixture of all, by introducing words derived from the ſweeteſt and ſmootheſt language then uſed throughout Europe, I mean the Provençal. It is however juſt to obſerve, that this reflection never made any great impreſſion,

preſſion, and that, with the beſt and moſt elegant writers in our tongue, Chaucer paſſes not only for a great improver, but for the very Father and Founder of it; and it is not a little to his honour, that amongſt thoſe who are of this opinion we may reckon one of the ſoundeſt of our criticks, and one of the correcteſt writers in our language. So wide the difference is between the narrow notions of falſe wits, and the fair and candid judgments that are given by the true * !

* *And the fair and candid judgments that are given by the true.*] The firſt writer that ventured to fall upon our Author was himſelf more than half a foreigner, and very far from being correct with reſpect to ſentiment or ſtyle. His very charge in the preſent caſe will prove what I have advanced: "The poet, "Geoffrey Chaucer," ſays he, "writing his poeſies in En- "gliſh, is of ſome called the firſt illuminator of the Engliſh "tongue. Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence "Chaucer as an excellent poet for his time. He was indeed a "great mingler of Engliſh with French, unto which language "(belike for that he was deſcended of French or rather Waloon "race) he carried a great affection." But Dr. Skinner, in a very elegant Latin ſtyle, has attacked our Author with much more ſpirit and force; I ſhall give his words in Engliſh: "The "poet Chaucer ſet the worſt example, who by bringing whole "ſhoals of French words into our language, which was but too "much adulterated before, through he effects of the Norman "conqueſt, deprived it almoſt wholly of its native grace and "ſplendour, laying on paint over its pure complexion, and "for a beautiful face ſubſtituted a downright maſk."

We

We cannot cloſe this life better than by giving a ſuccinct detail of our Author's family, or, to ſpeak with greater propriety, of his eldeſt ſon; for as to his ſecond ſon Lewis, we have no account in what ſtation he lived, or where he died: but as to Thomas Chaucer, the office of Chief Butler to the King, granted to him in the laſt year of Richard II. was afterwards given him for life, by letters patent from King Henry IV. and confirmed by Henry VI. In the 2d year of Henry IV. we find him Speaker of the Houſe of Commons, Sheriff of Oxfordſhire and of Berkſhire, and Conſtable of Wallingford-Caſtle and of Knareſborough-Caſtle during life. In the 4th year of the ſame reign the King directed an order to him, as Chief Butler, to deliver one hundred tons of wine to the Duke of Burgundy. In the 6th year of the ſame prince he was ſent Ambaſſador into France; and the year following he went beyond the ſeas, joined in commiſſion with the King's brother and Geoffrey Chaucer's nephew, Henry Beaufort Biſhop of Wincheſter. In the 9th year of the ſame reign, on Tueſday the 25th of October, the Commons preſented him their Speaker, as they did likewiſe in the 11th year, on Wedneſday the 28th of January. In the 12th year of that reign Queen Jane granted

to him, for his good ſervice, the manors of Woodſtock, Hannebrough, Wotton, and Stantesfield, during life; and in the 13th year, on the 5th of November, he was again preſented Speaker, as he was in the 2d of Henry V. on Wedneſday the ſecond day of parliament; and in the ſame year he was ſent by the King, in joint commiſſion with Hugh Mortimer, to treat of a marriage with Catharine daughter to the Duke of Burgundy. He was likewiſe Ambaſſador in the 5th and 6th years of the ſame reign, with Walter Húngerford, Steward of the Houſehold, in the ſame affair; and again in the 6th year of the ſame reign he was Ambaſſador for peace with France; and he paſſed through ſeveral other publick ſtations, as appears by records. He reſided chiefly at Ewelm in Oxfordſhire, which came to him by marriage, and there he died on the 28th of April, 1434, and was buried in that pariſh church, under black a marble tomb. By his wife Maud, or Matilda, who ſurvived him two years, he had one daughter named Alice, who was thrice married, firſt to Sir John Philips, Knight, and afterwards to Thomas Montacute Earl of Saliſbury, who dying left her very rich. Her third huſband was the famous William de la Pole, Earl and afterwards Duke of Suffolk, who was firſt ſecretly

ſecretly married to the Counteſs of Hainault, by whom he had one daughter, but procuring a divorce from her, he married this Alice, by whom he had one ſon, John Duke of Suffolk. Duke William lived chiefly at Dunnington and Ewelm, at the firſt of which Stowe ſays he built an hoſpital; but he ſeems to miſtake it for that founded by Adderbury, as before mentioned; for Dugdale takes no notice of any other; but at Ewelm he founded one called God's Houſe. He was an inſtance of the danger of a prince's favour, and the envy that attends it; for influencing the notions and the will of his maſter Henry VI. too much, and abuſing the power he had over that eaſy prince, he enraged the Commons to that degree, that nothing leſs than his baniſhment could appeaſe them; which being agreed to, the Yorkiſts, fearful of his return, ſeized him on his paſſage in Dover-road, and cut off his head upon the ſide of a cock-boat, and his body was buried at the Charter-Houſe at Hull. The Ducheſs ſurvived him ſeveral years, and, after an honourable life, died at Ewelm in the year 1475. Their ſon John had iſſue, according to Leland, John Earl of Lincoln, Edmund afterwards Duke of Suffolk, Richard, William, and a fifth ſon, who was a ſcholar in Gonvil-Hall in Cam-

bridge. Edmund de la Pole, the laſt of that name Duke of Suffolk, for being in treaſon againſt Henry VII. for which he had been once pardoned, forfeited his life to the crown, and was beheaded in the 7th year of that king's reign, whereby the eſtates which Chaucer's family was poſſeſſed of came to the crown, and particularly the hoſpital of Ewelm, which was by King James I. beſtowed on the Phyſick Profeſſor at Oxford, who is always maſter thereof in virtue of his office.

AN
INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE
TO THE
CANTERBURY TALES.

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§ 1. THE

§ 1. THE dramatick form which Boccace gave to his collection of tales or novels about the middle of the 14th century (1) muſt be allowed to have been a capital improvement of that ſpecies of amuſing compoſition. The Decameron in that reſpect (not to mention many others) has the ſame advantage over the

(1) The action of The Decameron being ſuppoſed in 1348, the year of the great peſtilence, it is probable that Boccace did not ſet about his work till after that period. How ſoon he completed it is uncertain. It ſhould ſeem from the introduction to the fourth day, that a part (containing perhaps the three firſt days) was publiſhed ſeparately; for in that introduction he takes pains to anſwer the cenſures which had been paſſed upon him by ſeveral perſons who had read his novels. One of the cenſures is, "that "it did not become *his age* to write for the amuſement of wo-"men, &c." In his anſwer he ſeems to allow the fact, that he was rather an old fellow, but endeavours to juſtify himſelf by the examples of Guido Cavalcanti et Dante Alighieri *gia vecchi* et Meſſer Cino da Piſtoia *vecchiſſimo*. It appears from a paſſage in the *Laberinto d'Amore* [ed. 1723, t. iii. page 24] that Boccace conſidered himſelf as an elderly man when he was a little turned of forty, and therefore the publication of the firſt part of The Decameron may very well have been, as Salviati has fixed it, [V. *Manni, Iſt. del Decam.* p. 144] in 1353, when Boccace was juſt forty years of age. If we conſider the nature of the work, and that the author in his concluſion calls it repeatedly *lunga fatica*, and ſays that *molto tempo* had paſſed between the commencement and the completion of it, we can hardly, I think, ſuppoſe that it was finiſhed in leſs than ten years, which will bring the publication of the entire collection of novels (as we now have it) down to 1358.

Cento Novelle Antiche, which are ſuppoſed to have preceded it in point of time, that a regular comedy will neceſſarily have over an equal number of ſingle unconnected ſcenes. Perhaps indeed there would be no great harm if the criticks would permit us to conſider The Decameron, and other compoſitions of that kind, in the light of comedies not intended for the ſtage; at leaſt we may venture to aſſume that the cloſer any ſuch compoſition ſhall copy the moſt eſſential forms of comedy, the more natural and defined the plan ſhall be, the more the characters ſhall be diverſified, the more the tale ſhall be ſuited to the characters, ſo much the more conſpicuous will be the ſkill of the writer, and his work approach the nearer to perfection.

§ 2. The Canterbury Tales are a work of the ſame nature with The Decameron, and were in all probability compoſed in imitation of it, though upon a different and (in my opinion) an improved plan. It would be eaſy to ſhew that, in the ſeveral points above mentioned, Chaucer has either been more judicious or more fortunate than his maſter Boccace; but (waving for the preſent (2) that diſquiſition) I ſhall

(2) I will only juſt mention what appear to me to be fundamental defects in The Decameron. In the firſt place, the *action*

ſhall proceed to the immediate object of this Diſcourſe, which is, in the firſt place, to lay before the reader the general plan of The Canterbury Tales, as it appears to have been originally deſigned by Chaucer, and, ſecondly, to give a particular review of the ſeveral parts of that Work which are come down to us as they are publiſhed in this edition.

§ 3. The general plan of The Canterbury Tales may be learned in a great meaſure from the Prologue which Chaucer himſelf has prefixed to them. He ſuppoſes there that a company of pilgrims going to

tion is indefinite, not limited by its own nature, but merely by the will of the author. It might, if he had been ſo pleaſed, have as well comprehended twenty or a hundred days as ten, and therefore, though ſome frivolous reaſons are aſſigned for the return of the company to Florence, we ſee too plainly, that the true reaſon was, that the budget of novels was exhauſted; not to mention that every day after the firſt may properly be conſidered as containing a new action, or, what is worſe, a repetition of the action of the former day. The ſecond defect is in the *characters*, which are ſo nearly reſembling to each other in age, rank, and even natural diſpoſition, that if they had been ſtrictly ſupported, their converſation muſt have been incapable of that variety which is neceſſary to carry the reader through ſo long a work. The third defect has ariſen from the author's attempt to remedy the ſecond. In order to diverſify and enliven his narrations, he has made a circle of virtuous ladies and polite gentlemen hear and relate in their turns a number of ſtories, which cannot with any degree of probability be ſuppoſed to have been ſuffered in ſuch an aſſembly.

Canterbury

Canterbury aſſemble at an inn in Southwark, and agree, that, for their common amuſement on the road, each of them ſhall tell at leaſt one Tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence, and that he who ſhall tell the beſt Tales, ſhall be treated by the reſt with a ſupper upon their return to the ſame inn. This is ſhortly the fable. The characters of the pilgrims are as various as at that time could be found in the ſeveral departments of middle life; that is, in fact, as various as could with any probability be brought together ſo as to form one company, the higheſt and the loweſt ranks of ſociety being neceſſarily excluded. It appears further that the deſign of Chaucer was not barely to recite the Tales told by the pilgrims, but alſo to deſcribe their journey. *And all the remenant of* their *pilgrimage*, [v. 726] including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add that the Tales, beſides being nicely adapted to the characters of their reſpective relators, were intended to be connected together by ſuitable introductions, and interſperſed with diverting epiſodes, and that the greateſt part of them was to have been executed in verſe, we ſhall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking; and

admiring,

admiring, as we muſt, the vigour of that genius which in an advanced age (3) could begin ſo vaſt a work, we ſhall rather lament than be ſurpriſed that it has been left imperfect.

§ 4. In truth, if we compare thoſe parts of The Canterbury Tales of which we are in poſſeſſion with the ſketch which has been juſt given of the intended whole, it will be found that more than one half is wanting. The Prologue we have perhaps nearly complete, and the greateſt part of the journey to

(3) Chaucer was born in 1328, and it is moſt probable, I think, that he did not begin his Canterbury Tales before 1382, at the earlieſt. My reaſon is this. The queen, who is mentioned in The Legende of Good Women, v. 496, was certainly Anne of Bohemia, the firſt queen of Rich. II.; ſhe was not married to Richard till the beginning of 1382, ſo that The Legende cannot poſſibly be ſuppoſed of an earlier date than that year. In The Legende [ver. 329---332, ver. 417---430] Chaucer has enumerated, I believe, all the conſiderable works which he had then compoſed. It was to his purpoſe not to omit any. He not only does not mention The Canterbury Tales, but he expreſsly names the ſtory of Palamon and Arcite, and the Life of Saint Cecilia, both which now make part of them, as ſeparate compoſitions. I am perſuaded therefore, that in 1382 the work of The Canterbury Tales was not begun; and if we look further, and conſider the troubles in which Chaucer was involved for the five or ſix following years by his connections with John of Northampton, we can hardly ſuppoſe that it was much advanced before 1389, the ſixty-firſt year of the Author's age.

Canterbury,

Canterbury, but not a word of the tranſactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the Epilogue which we may ſuppoſe was to have concluded the work, with an account of the prize-ſupper, and the ſeparation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury it will be neceſſary, in the following review, to take notice of certain defects and inconſiſtencies, which can only be accounted for upon the ſuppoſition that the work was never finiſhed by the Author.

§ 5. Having thus ſtated the general plan of The Canterbury Tales, I ſhall now, according to my promiſe, enter upon a particular review of thoſe parts of them which are publiſhed in this edition, beginning with *The Prologue.*

It ſeems to have been the intention of Chaucer, in the firſt lines of the Prologue, to mark with ſome exactneſs the *time* of his ſuppoſed pilgrimage; but, unluckily, the two circumſtances of his deſcription, which were moſt likely to anſwer that purpoſe, are each of them irreconcileable to the other. When he tells us that *the ſhoures of April had perced to the rote the droughte of March*, ver. 1, 2, we muſt ſuppoſe (in order to allow due time for ſuch an operation) that April was far advanced, while on the other hand the place

place of the ſun, *having juſt run half his courſe in the Ram*, ver. 7, 8, reſtrains us to ſome day in the very latter end of March, as the vernal equinox in the age of Chaucer, according to his own treatiſe on the Aſtrolabe (4), was computed to happen on the 12th of March. This difficulty may (and I think ſhould) be removed by reading in ver. 8, *the Bull*, inſtead of *the Ram* (5). All the parts of the deſcription will then be conſiſtent with themſelves, and with another paſſage, [ver. 4425,] where, in the beſt mſſ. *the eighte and twenty day* of April is named as the day of the journey to Canterbury.

(4) In this particular the editions agree with the mſſ. but in general the printed text of this treatiſe is ſo monſtrouſly incorrect, that it cannot be cited with any ſafety.

(5) This correction may ſeem to be authorized in ſome meaſure by Lydgate, who begins his Continuation of The Canterbury Tales in this manner:

> Whan bright Phebus *paſſed was the Ram*
> Midde of Aprill, and into the Bull came.

But the truth is that Dan John wrote for the moſt part in a great hurry, and conſequently without much accuracy. In the account which he proceeds to give of Chaucer's Tales, he not only confounds the circumſtances of deſcription of the Sompnour and Pardoner, but he ſpeaks of the latter as---

> Telling a tale to anger with the Frere.
> *Storie of Thebes*, ver. 32—35.

We

We will ſuppoſe therefore that the preceding day, the ſeven-and-twentieth of April, was the day on which the company aſſembled at the Tabard. In what year this happened, Chaucer has not thought fit to inform us (6): either he did not think it neceſſary to

(6) It is clear that, whether the pilgrimage were real or imaginary, Chaucer as a poet had a right to ſuppoſe it to have happened at the time which he thought beſt: he was only to take care, when the time was once fixed, that no circumſtances were admitted into his poem which might claſh or be inconſiſtent with the date of it. When no particular date is aſſigned to a fable of this ſort, we muſt naturally imagine that the date of the fable coincides with that of the compoſition, and accordingly, if we examine The Canterbury Tales, we ſhall not find any circumſtances which do not perfectly ſuit with that period which has been ſtated in a former note, as the probable time of Chaucer's beginning to compoſe them. The lateſt hiſtorical fact mentioned in them is the inſurrection of Jakke Straw, [ver. 15400] which happened in 1381, and the earlieſt in which any perſon of the drama is concerned is the ſiege of Algezir, [ver. 56, 57] which began in Auguſt 1342, and ended with the taking of the city in March, 1344. [*Mariana*, l. xvi. c. 10, 11.] The Knight therefore may very well be ſuppoſed to have been at that ſiege, and alſo upon a pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1383, or thereabouts.---They who are diſpoſed to believe the pilgrimage to have been real, and to have happened in 1383, may ſupport their opinion by the following inſcription, which is ſtill to be read upon the inn, now called the Talbot in Southwark; "This is the inn where Sir Jeffrey Chaucer and the twenty-"nine Pilgrims lodged in their journey to Canterbury, *anno* "1383." Though the preſent inſcription is evidently of a very recent

to fix that point at all, or perhaps he poſtponed it till the completion of his work ſhould enable him to aſſign

recent date, we might ſuppoſe it to have been propagated to us by a ſucceſſion of faithful tranſcripts from the very time; but unluckily there is too good reaſon to be aſſured that the firſt inſcription of this ſort was not earlier than the laſt century. Mr. Speght, who appears to have been inquiſitive concerning this inn in 1597, has left us this account of it in his Gloſſary, v. *Tabard:* "A jaquet or ſleveleſſe coate, worne in times paſt by noblemen in the warres, but now onely by herault's, and is called theyre coate of armes in ſerviſe. It is the ſigne of an inne in Southwarke by London, within the which was the lodging of the Abbot of Hyde by Wincheſter. This was the hoſtelry where Chaucer and the other pilgrims mett together, and, with Henry Baily their hoſte, accorded about the manner of their journey to Canterbury. And whereas through time it hath bin much decaied, it is now by maſter J. Preſton, with the Abbot's houſe thereto adjoyned, newly repaired, and with conve-nient roomes much encreaſed, for the receipt of many gueſts." If any inſcription of this kind had then been there, he would hardly have omitted to mention it, and therefore I am perſuaded it has been put up ſince his time, and moſt probably when the ſign was changed from the Tabard to the Talbot, in order to preſerve the ancient glory of the houſe notwithſtanding its new title. Whoever furniſhed the date, muſt be allowed to have at leaſt invented plauſibly.---While I am upon the ſubject of this famous hoſtelry, I will juſt add, that it was probably parcel of two tenements which appear to have been conveyed by William de Ludegarſale to the Abbot, *&c. de Hydâ juxta Winton*, in 1306, and which are deſcribed (in a former conveyance there recited) to extend in length, "a communi foſſato de Suthwerke verſus Orientem, uſque Regiam viam de Suthwerke verſus Occidentem."

aſſign ſuch a date to his fable, as ſhould be conſiſtent with all the hiſtorical circumſtances which he might take occaſion to introduce into it.

§ 6. A ſecond point intended to be defined in the Prologue, is the number of the company; and this too has its difficulties. They are ſaid, in ver. 24, to have been *nine-and-twenty*; but it is not clear whether Chaucer himſelf is included in that number; they might therefore, according to that paſſage, be *thirty:* but if we reckon the ſeveral characters as they are enumerated in the Prologue, we ſhall find them *one-and-thirty;* 1. a Knight, 2. a Squier. 3. a Yeman, 4. a Prioreſſe, 5. an other Nonne, 6, 7, 8. three Preeſtes, 9. a Monk, 10. a Frere, 11. a Marchant, 12. a Clerk of Oxenforde, 13. a Sergeant of the Lawe, 14. a Frankelein, 15. an Haberdaſher, 16. a Carpenter, 17. a Webbe, 18. a Deyer, 19. a Tapiſer, 20. a Coke, 21. a Shipman, 22. a Doctour of Phyſike, 23. a Wif of Bathe, 24. a Perſone, 25. a Plowman, 26. a Reve, 27. a Miller, 28. a Sompnour, 29. a Pardoner, 30. a Manciple, 31.

" Occidentem." *Regiſtrum de Hyde, Mſ. Harl.* 1761, fol. 166 ---173. If we ſhould ever be ſo happy as to recover the account-books of the Abbey of Hyde, we may poſſibly learn what rent Harry Bailly paid for his inn, and many other important particulars.

Chaucer

Chaucer himſelf. It muſt be obſerved however, that in this liſt there is one very ſuſpicious article, which is that of the *three Preeſtes*. As it appears evidently to have been the deſign of Chaucer to compoſe his company of individuals of different ranks, in order to produce a greater variety of diſtinct characters, we can hardly conceive that he would, in this ſingle inſtance, introduce *three* of the ſame profeſſion, without any diſcriminating circumſtances whatever; and in fact, when the Nonne's Preeſt is called upon to tell his Tale, [ver. 14814] he is accoſted by the Hoſt in a manner which will not permit us to ſuppoſe that two others of the ſame denomination were preſent. This muſt be allowed to be a ſtrong objection to the genuineneſs of that article of the *three* Preeſtes; but it is not the only one. All the other characters are particularly deſcribed, and moſt of them very much at large; whereas the whole that is ſaid of the *other Nonne* and the *three Preeſtes* is contained in theſe two lines [ver. 163, 4] at the end of the Prioreſſe's character:

> Another Nonne alſo with hire had ſhe,
> That was hire Chapellein, and Preeſtes three.

Where it is alſo obſervable, that the ſingle circumſtance of deſcription is falſe; for no nonne could be a

chaplain. The chief duty of a chaplain was to ſay maſs and to hear confeſſion, neither of which offices could regularly be performed by a nonne, or by any woman (7).

It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that we have ſufficient ground to reject theſe two lines, or at leaſt the ſecond, as an interpolation (8); by which means we ſhall

(7) It appears that ſome abbeſſes did at one time attempt to hear the confeſſions of their nuns, and to exerciſe ſome other ſmaller parts of the clerical function: but this practice, I apprehend, was ſoon ſtopped by Gregory IX. who has forbidden it in the ſtrongeſt terms, *Decretal.* l. v. tit. 38, c. x. "Nova quædam noſtris ſunt auribus intimata, quod Abbatiſſæ moniales "proprias benedicunt; *ipſarum quoque confeſſiones in criminibus* "*audiunt*, et legentes Evangelium præſumunt publice prædicare: Cum igitur id abſonum ſit et pariter abſurdum, Mandamus quatenus ne id de cætero fiat cunctis firmiter inhibere." If theſe preſumptuous abbeſſes had ventured to ſay maſs, his Holineſs would doubtleſs have thundered ſtill louder againſt them.

(8) My notion (I cannot call it opinion) of the matter is this; that the firſt of theſe lines did really begin the character of the Nonne, which Chaucer had originally inſerted in this place, together with that of the Nonne's Preeſt, at as great length as the other characters; but that they were both afterwards expunged either by himſelf, or (more probably) by thoſe who publiſhed his work after his death, for reaſons of nearly the ſame kind with thoſe which occaſioned the ſuppreſſion of the latter part of The Coke's Tale. I ſuſpect our bard had been rather too gay in his deſcription of theſe two religious perſons. See a little concerning the Preeſt, ver. 15453---65. If it ſhould be thought improbable

ſhall get rid of *two* of the Preeſtes, and the detail of the characters will agree with the groſs number in ver. 24, Chaucer himſelf being included among the *nine-and-twenty*. As noveliſts generally delight in even numbers, it is not improbable that the Hoſt was intended to be the thirtieth: though not under the ſame obligation with the other pilgrims, he might nevertheleſs tell his Tale among them as a volunteer.

§ 7. This leads me, in the third place, to examine what the *agreement* was which the pilgrims entered into, at the ſuggeſtion of the Hoſt, with reſpect to the number of Tales that each perſon was to tell. The propoſal of the Hoſt ſtands thus, with very little variation, in all the mſſ.

This is the point—[ſays he, ver. 792—5]

> That eche of you, to ſhorten with youre way,
> In this viage ſhal tellen Tales tway,
> To Canterbury ward, I mene it ſo,
> And homeward he ſhal tellen other two.

improbable that an interpolator would inſert any thing ſo abſurd and contradictory to the Author's plan as the ſecond line, I beg leave to ſuggeſt, that it is ſtill more improbable that ſuch a line ſhould have come from the Author himſelf; and further, I think I can promiſe, in the courſe of the following Work, to point out ſeveral other undoubted interpolations, which are to the full as abſurd as the ſubject of our preſent diſcuſſion,

From this paſſage we ſhould certainly conclude, that each of them was to tell *two* Tales in the journey to Canterbury, and *two more* in the journey homeward: but all the other paſſages in which mention is made of this agreement, would rather lead us to believe that they were to tell only *one* Tale in each journey, and the Prologue to The Parſon's Tale ſtrongly confirms this latter ſuppoſition. The Hoſt ſays there, [ver. 17317]

Now lacketh us no Tales mo than on---

and calling upon the Parſon to tell this one Tale which was wanting, he ſays to him, [ver. 17335]

---ne breke thou not our play,
For every man, ſave thou, hath told his Tale.

The Parſon therefore had not told any Tale before, and only one Tale was expected from him (and conſequently from each of the others) upon that journey.

It is true that a very ſlight alteration of the paſſage firſt cited would reconcile that too to this hypotheſis; if it were written—

That eche of you, to ſhorten with youre way,
In this viage ſhal tellen Tales tway,
To Canterbury ward, I mene it, *e*,
And homeward he ſhal tell another *te*------

the

the original propoſition of the Hoſt would perfectly agree with what appears to have been the ſubſequent practice. However, I cannot venture to propoſe ſuch an alteration of the text in oppoſition to ſo many mſſ. ſome of them of the beſt note; and therefore the reader, if he is ſo pleaſed, may conſider this as one of thoſe inconſiſtencies hinted at above, which prove too plainly that the Author had not finiſhed his Work.

§ 8. The remainder of the Prologue is employed in deſcribing the characters of the pilgrims, and their firſt ſetting out upon their journey. The little that it may be neceſſary to ſay in illuſtration of ſome of the characters I ſhall reſerve for the Notes. The circumſtances of their ſetting out are related ſuccinctly and naturally; and the contrivance of appointing the Knight *by lot* to tell the firſt Tale, is a happy one, as it affords the Author the opportunity of giving his Work a ſplendid opening, and at the ſame time does not infringe that apparent equality upon which the freedom of diſcourſe, and conſequently the eaſe and good humour of every ſociety, ſo entirely depends. The general ſatisfaction which this appointment is ſaid to give to the company, puts us in mind of a ſimilar gratification to the ſecret wiſhes of the Grecian army, when the lot of fighting with Hec-

tor falls to Ajax, though there is not the leaſt probability that Chaucer had ever read the Iliad, even in a tranſlation.

§ 9. *The Knighte's Tale*, or at leaſt a poem upon the ſame ſubject, was originally compoſed by Chaucer as a ſeparate work: as ſuch it is mentioned by him, among ſome of his other works, in The Legende of Gode Women, [ver. 420, 1] under the title of—*Al the Love of Palamon and Arcite of Thebes, though the Storie is knowen lite*—and the laſt words ſeem to imply that it had not made itſelf very popular. It is not impoſſible that at firſt it was a mere tranſlation of The Theſeida of Boccace, and that its preſent form was given to it when Chaucer determined to aſſign it the firſt place among his Canterbury Tales. As The Theſeida, upon which this Tale is entirely founded, is very rarely to be met with (9), it may be not unpleaſing to the reader to

(9) The letter, which Boccace ſent to the Fiammetta with this poem, is dated *di Napoli a 15 d'Aprile* 1341. [*Lettere di* xiii. *Uomini Illuſt. Ven.* 1564.] I believe that date is a true one, and it is remarkable, as being the very year and month in which Petrarch received the laurel at Rome. The long friendſhip, which ſubſiſted between theſe two extraordinary men, muſt probably have commenced in the preceding winter, when Petrarch came to Naples, in order to be examined by King Robert, previouſly

to ſee here a ſhort ſummary of it, which will ſhew with what ſkill Chaucer has proceeded in reducing a poem

viouſly to his going to Rome. Boccace ſeems to have been preſent at ſome of the converſations between him and the king. [*Geneal. Deor.* l. xiv. c. xxii.]---The firſt edition of the Theſeida, according to Quadrio, [t. vi. p. 462] was without date, and under the miſtaken title of *Amazonide*, which might have been proper enough for the firſt book: it was ſoon after however reprinted, with its true title, at Ferrara, in 1475, fol. Dr. Aſkew was ſo obliging as to lend me the only copy of this edition, which I have ever heard of in England. The Rev. Mr. Crofts has a later edition in 4to, printed at Venice in 1528; but in that the poem has been *riveduto e emendato*, that is, in plain Engliſh, modernized. I cannot help ſuſpecting that Salvini, who has inveighed with great bitterneſs againſt the corruptions of the printed Theſeida, [*Manni, Iſt. del Decam.* p. 52] had only examined this laſt edition; for I obſerve that a ſtanza which he has quoted (from ſome mſ. as I ſuppoſe) is not near ſo correct as it is in the edition of 1475. As this ſtanza contains Boccace's own account of the intention of his poem, I ſhall tranſcribe it here from that edition. It is the beginning of his concluſion:

Poi che le Muſe nude cominciaro
Nel conſpeto de gli omeni ad andare,
Gia ſur de quelli che [gia] le exercitaro
Con bello ſtilo in *boneſto* parlare,
E altri in *amoroſo* lo operaro;
Ma tu, o libro, primo al lor cantare
Di *Marte* fai gli affanni ſoſtenuti,
Nel vulgar Latino mai piu non veduti.

This plainly alludes to a paſſage in Dante, *de Vulgari Eloquentia*, l. ii. c. ii. where, after having pointed out the three great

poem of about ten thouſand lines to a little more than two thouſand, without omitting any material circumſtance.

The Theſeida is diſtributed into twelve books or cantos.

B. I. Contains the war of Theſeus with the Amazons, their ſubmiſſion to him, and his marriage with Hippolyta.

B. II. Theſeus, having ſpent two years in Scythia, is reproached by Pirithous in a viſion, and immediately returns to Athens with Hippolyta and her ſiſter Emilia. He enters the city in triumph, finds the Grecian ladies in the temple of Clemenzia, marches to Thebes, kills Creon, &c. and brings home Palemone and Arcita, who are

Damnati---ad eterna preſone.

B. III. Emilia, walking in a garden and ſinging, is

ſubjects of poetry, viz. *arma, amorem, et rectitudinem* (war, love, and morality), and enumerated the illuſtrious writers upon each, he adds, *arma vero nullum Italum adhuc invenio poetaſſe.* Boccace therefore apparently prides himſelf upon having ſupplied the defect remarked by Dante, and upon being the firſt who taught the Italian Muſes to ſing of arms.------Beſides other variations for the worſe, the fifth line in Salvini's copy is written thus;

Ed altri in *dolci modi* l'operaro———

by which means the alluſion to Dante is rendered incomplete.

heard

heard and ſeen firſt by Arcita (10), who calls Palemone. They are both equally enamoured of her, but without any jealouſy or rivalſhip. Emilia is ſuppoſed to ſee them at the window, and to be not diſpleaſed with their admiration.—Arcita is releaſed at the requeſt of Pirithous, takes his leave of Palemone with embraces, &c.

B. IV. Arcita, having changed his name to Pentheo, goes into the ſervice of Menelaus at Mycenæ, and afterwards of Peleus at Ægina: from thence he returns to Athens, and becomes a favourite ſervant of Theſeus, being known to Emilia, though to nobody elſe; till after ſome time he is overheard making his complaint in a wood, to which he uſually reſorted for that purpoſe, by Pamphilo, a ſervant of Palemone.

(10) In deſcribing the commencement of this amour, which is to be the ſubject of the remainder of the poem, Chaucer has entirely departed from his author in three principal circumſtances, and I think in each with very good reaſon. 1. By ſuppoſing Emilia to be ſeen firſt by Palamon, he gives him an advantage over his rival, which makes the cataſtrophe more conſonant to poetical juſtice. 2. The picture which Boccace has exhibited of two young princes violently enamoured of the ſame object, without jealouſy or rivalſhip, if not abſolutely unnatural, is certainly very inſipid and unpoetical. 3. As no conſequence is to follow from their being ſeen by Emilia at this time, it is better, I think, to ſuppoſe, as Chaucer has done, that they are not ſeen by her.

B. V. Upon the report of Pamphilo, Palemone begins to be jealous of Arcita, and is deſirous to get out of priſon, in order to fight with him. This he accompliſhes with the aſſiſtance of Pamphilo, by changing clothes with Alimeto, a phyſician. He goes armed to the wood in queſt of Arcita, whom he finds ſleeping. At firſt they are very civil and friendly to each other (11); then Palemone calls upon Arcita to renounce his pretenſions to Emilia, or to fight with him. After many long expoſtulations on the part of Arcita, they fight, and are diſcovered firſt by Emilia, who ſends for Theſeus. When he finds who they are, and the cauſe of their difference, he forgives them, and propoſes the method of deciding their claim to Emilia by a combat of an hundred on each ſide, to which they gladly agree.

B. VI. Palemone and Arcita live ſplendidly at Athens, and ſend out meſſengers to ſummon their

(11) En fieme ſe fer feſta di bon core,
E li loro accidenti ſi narraro. *Theſ.* l. v.

This is ſurely too much in the ſtyle of romance. Chaucer has made them converſe more naturally; he has alſo judiciouſly avoided to copy Boccace in repreſenting Arcite as more moderate than his rival.

friends,

friends, who arrive; and the principal of them are ſeverally deſcribed, viz. Lycurgus, Peleus, Phocus, Telamon, &c. Agamemnon, Menelaus, Caſtor and Pollux, &c. Neſtor, Evander, Pirithous, Ulyſſes, Diomedes, Pygmalion, Minos, &c. with a great diſplay of ancient hiſtory and mythology.

B. VII. Theſeus declares the laws of the combat, and the two parties of an hundred on each ſide are formed. The day before the combat, Arcita, after having viſited the temples of all the gods, makes a formal prayer to Mars. The prayer, being perſonified (12), is ſaid to go and find Mars in his temple in

(12) Era alor forſi Marte in exercitio
Di chiara far la parte ruginoſa
Del grande ſuo e horribile hoſpitio,
Quando de Arcita *la oration* pietoſa
Pervenne li per fare il dato offitio,
Tutta ne lo aſpecto lagrimoſa;
La qual divene di ſpavento muta,
Come di Marte hebbe laca veduta. *Theſ.* l. vii.

As this contrivance of perſonifying the prayers, and ſending them to the ſeveral deities, is only in order to introduce a deſcription of the reſpective temples, it will be allowed, I believe, that Chaucer has attained the ſame end by a mere natural fiction. It is very probable that Boccace caught the idea of making the prayers perſons from Homer, with whoſe works he was better acquainted than moſt of his contemporaries in this part of the world; and there can be no doubt, I ſuppoſe, that Chaucer's imagination,

in Thrace, which is deſcribed; and Mars, upon underſtanding the meſſage, cauſes favourable ſigns to be given to Arcita. In the ſame manner Palemone cloſes his religious obſervances with a prayer to Venus. His prayer, being alſo perſonified, ſets out for the temple of Venus on Mount Citherone, which is alſo deſcribed, and the petition is granted. Then the ſacrifice of Emilia to Diana is deſcribed; her prayer; the appearance of the goddeſs, and the ſigns

imagination, in the expedient which he has ſubſtituted, was aſſiſted by the occaſional edifices which he had himſelf ſeen erected for the decoration of tournaments.------The combat which follows having no foundation in ancient hiſtory or manners, it is no wonder that both poets ſhould have admitted a number of incongruous circumſtances into their deſcription of it. The great advantage which Chaucer has over his original in this reſpect is, that he is much ſhorter. When we have read in the Theſeida a long and learned catalogue of all the heroes of antiquity brought together upon this occaſion, we are only the more ſurpriſed to ſee Theſeus, in ſuch an aſſembly, conferring the honour of knighthood upon the two Theban chieftains.

E ſenza ſtare con non piccolo honore
Cinſe le ſpade a li dui ſcudieri,
E ad Arcita Polluce e Caſtore
Calciaro d'oro li ſproni e volontieri,
E Diomede e Ulixe di cuore
Calzati a Palemone, e cavalieri
Ambeduì furono alora novelli
Li inamorati Theban damigieli. *Theſ.* l. vii.

of

of the two fires.—In the morning they proceed to the theatre with their reſpective troops, and prepare for the action. Arcita puts up a private prayer to Emilia, and harangues his troop publickly, and Palemone does the ſame.

B. VIII. Contains a deſcription of the battle, in which Palemone is taken priſoner.

B. IX. The horſe of Arcita, being frighted by a Fury ſent from hell at the deſire of Venus, throws him: however, he is carried to Athens in a triumphal chariot with Emilia by his ſide, is put to bed dangerouſly ill, and there by his own deſire eſpouſes Emilia.

B. X. The funeral of the perſons killed in the combat. Arcita, being given over by his phyſicians, makes his will in diſcourſe with Theſeus, and deſires that Palemone may inherit all his poſſeſſions, and alſo Emilia: he then takes leave of Palemone and Emilia, to whom he repeats the ſame requeſt. Their lamentations. Arcita orders a ſacrifice to Mercury (which Palemone performs for him), and dies.

B. XI. Opens with the paſſage of Arcita's ſoul to heaven, imitated from the beginning of the 9th book of Lucan. The funeral of Arcita. Deſcription of the wood felled takes up ſix ſtanzas. Palemone builds a temple in honour of him, in which his whole hiſtory is painted. The deſcription of this painting

painting is an abridgment of the preceding part of the poem.

B. XII. Theſeus propoſes to carry into execution Arcita's will by the marriage of Palemone and Emilia: this they both decline for ſome time in formal ſpeeches; but at laſt are perſuaded and married. The kings, &c. take their leave, and Palemone remains—*in gioia e in diporto con la ſua dona nobile e corteſe.*

From this ſketch of the Theſeida, it is evident enough, that Chaucer was obliged to Boccace (13) for

(13) To whom Boccace was obliged is a more difficult ſubject of inquiry. That the ſtory was of his own invention I think is ſcarce credible. He ſpeaks of it himſelf as *very ancient*, [*Lett. alla Fiammetta. Biblioth. Smith. App.* p. 141.] "Trovata una "antichiſſima Storia, e al più delle genti non manifeſta, in Lati-"no volgare, acciocchè più dilettaſſe e maſſimamente a voi, che "già con ſommo titolo le mie rime eſaltaſte, ho ridotta." He then tells her that ſhe will obſerve that what is related under the name of *one* of the two lovers and of Emilia, is very ſimilar to what had actually paſſed between herſelf and him; and adds—"Se forſe alcune coſe ſoperchie vi foſſono, il voler bene coprire "ciò che non era oneſto manifeſtare, da noi due in fuori, e'l vo-"lere la ſtoria ſeguire, ne ſono cagione." I am well aware, however, that declarations of this kind, prefixed to fabulous works, are not much to be depended upon. The wildeſt of the French romances are commonly ſaid by the authors to be tranſlated from ſome old Latin chronicle at St. Denys: and certainly the ſtory of Palemone and Arcita, as related by Boccace, could not be *very ancient*. If it was of Greek original (as I rather ſuſpect

for the plan and principal incidents of The Knighte's Tale; and in the Notes upon that Tale I ſhall point out ſome paſſages, out of many more, which are literal tranſlations from the Italian.

§ 10. When the Knight has finiſhed his Tale, the Hoſt with great propriety calls upon the *Monk*, as the next in rank among the men, to tell the next Tale: but, as it ſeems to have been the intention of Chaucer to avail himſelf of the variety of his characters, in order to diſtribute alternate ſucceſſions of ſerious and comick in nearly equal proportions throughout his Work, he has contrived that the Hoſte's arrangement ſhall be ſet aſide by the intruſion of the dronken Miller, whoſe Tale is ſuch as might be expected from his character and condition, a complete contraſt to the Knighte's.

§ 11. I have not been able to diſcover from whence the ſtory of *The Miller's Tale* is taken; ſo that for the preſent I muſt give Chaucer credit for it as his own invention, though in general he appears

ſuſpect), it muſt have been thrown into its preſent form after the Norman princes had introduced the manners of chivalry into their dominions in Sicily and Italy.------The poem in modern Greek political verſes, *De nuptiis Theſei et Emiliæ*, printed at Venice in 1529, is a mere tranſlation of The Theſeida. The author has even tranſlated the prefatory epiſtle addreſſed by Boccace to The Fiammetta.

to

to have built his Tales, both ſerious and comick, upon ſtories which he found ready made. The great difference is, that in his ſerious pieces he often follows his author with the ſervility of a mere tranſlator, and, in conſequence, his narration is jejune and conſtrained; whereas in the comick, he is generally ſatisfied with borrowing a ſlight hint of his ſubject, which he varies, enlarges, and embelliſhes at pleaſure, and gives the whole the air and colour of an original; a ſure ſign that his genius rather led him to compoſitions of the latter kind.

§ 12. The next Tale is told by the *Reve* (who is repreſented above [ver. 589] as a cholerick man) in revenge of The Miller's Tale. It has been generally ſaid to be borrowed from The Decameron, d. ix. n. 6; but I rather think that both Boccace and Chaucer, in this inſtance, have taken whatever they have in common from an old *fabliau* or *conte* of an anonymous French rhymer, *De Gombert et des deux Clers*. The reader may eaſily ſatisfy himſelf upon this head by caſting his eye upon the French *Fabliau*, which has lately been printed with ſeveral others from mſſ. in France. See *Fabliaux et Contes, Paris*, 1756, t. ii. p. 115—124.

§ 13. *The Coke's Tale* is imperfect in all the mſſ. which

which I have had an opportunity of examining. In mſ. *A.* it ſeems to have been entirely omitted; and indeed I cannot help ſuſpecting that it was intended to be omitted, at leaſt in this place, as in the Manciple's Prologue, when the Coke is called upon to tell a Tale, there is no intimation of his having told one before. Perhaps our Author might think that three Tales of *barlotrie*, as he calls it, together would be too much. However, as it is ſufficiently certain, that the Coke's Prologue and the beginning of his Tale are genuine compoſitions, they have their uſual place in this edition. There was not the ſame reaſon for inſerting The Story of Gamelyn, which in ſome mſſ. is annexed to The Coke's Tale. It is not to be found in any of the mſſ. of the firſt authority; and the manner, ſtyle, and verſification, all prove it to have been the work of an author much inferior to Chaucer. I did not therefore think myſelf warranted to publiſh it a ſecond time among The Canterbury Tales, though, as a relick of our ancient poetry, and the foundation perhaps of Shakeſpeare's *As you Like It*, I could have wiſhed to ſee it more accurately printed than it is in the only edition which we have of it.

§ 14. In *the Prologue to The Man of Lawe's Tale*,

Chaucer recals our attention to the action (if I may ſo call it) of his drama, the journey of the pilgrims. They had ſet out ſoon after *the day began to ſpring*, [ver. 824, and f.] When the Reve was beginning to tell his Tale, they were in the neighbourhood of Deptford and Greenwich, and it was *half way prime*, that is, I ſuppoſe, *half way* paſt *prime*, about half an hour after ſeven A. M. [ver. 3904, 5.] How much further they were advanced upon their road at this time is not ſaid; but the hour of the day is pointed out to us by two circumſtances: we are firſt told [ver. 4422, 3,] that

> ---------the ſonne
> The ark of his artificial day had ronne
> The fourthe part and half an hour and more------

and ſecondly, [ver. 4432] that he was "five and "forty degrees high;" and this laſt circumſtance is ſo confirmed by the mention of a correſponding phænomenon, that it is impoſſible to ſuſpect any error in the number. The equality in length of ſhadows to their projecting bodies can only happen when the ſun is at the height of five and forty degrees. Unfortunately, however, this deſcription, though ſeemingly intended to be ſo accurate, will neither enable us to conclude with the mſſ. that it was *ten of the clock*,

clock, nor to fix upon any other hour, as the two circumſtances juſt mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the 28th (or of any other) day of April (14) in this climate. All that we can conclude with certainty is, that it was *not paſt* ten of the clock.

The compliments which Chaucer has introduced upon his own Writings are modeſt enough, and quite unexceptionable: but if the reflection [ver. 4497, and f.] upon thoſe who relate ſuch ſtories as that of Canace, or of Apollonius Tyrius, was levelled at Gower, as I very much ſuſpect, it will be

(14) The 28th day of April, in the time of Chaucer, anſwering to our 6th or 7th of May, the ſun, in the latitude of London, roſe about half an hour after four, and the length of the artificial day was a little more than fifteen hours. *A fourth part* of fifteen hours (= three hours forty-five minutes) *and half an hour and more*----may be fairly computed to make together four hours and a half, which being reckoned from four one half A. M. give the time of the day exactly nine A. M. but the ſun was not at the altitude of 45° till above half an hour after nine. In like manner if we take the 18th day (according to all the editions and ſome mſſ.) we ſhall find that the ſun indeed was 45° high at ten A. M. exactly, but that *the fourth part* of the day *and half an hour and more* had been completed at nine A. M. -----In this uncertainty I have left the text as I found it in all the beſt mſſ. only *mſ. H. A.* does not expreſs the hour, but reads thus:

Yt was atte cloke——

difficult to reconcile ſuch an attack to our notions of the ſtrict friendſhip which is generally ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted between the two bards (15). The attack too at this time muſt appear the more extraordinary on the part of our bard, as he is juſt going to put into the mouth of his Man of Lawe a Tale, of which almoſt every circumſtance is borrowed from Gower. The fact is, that the ſtory of Canace is related by Gower in his *Conf. Amant.* b. iii. and the ſtory of (16) Apollonius (or Apollynus, as he is

(15) There is another circumſtance which rather inclines me to believe that their friendſhip ſuffered ſome interruption in the latter part of their lives. In the new edition of the *Confeſſio Amantis*, which Gower publiſhed after the acceſſion of Henry IV. the verſes in praiſe of Chaucer [fol. 190. b. col. 1, ed. 1532] are omitted. [See *mſ. Harl.* 3869.] Though perhaps the death of Chaucer at that time had rendered the compliment contained in thoſe verſes leſs proper than it was at firſt, that alone does not ſeem to have been a ſufficient reaſon for omitting them; eſpecially as the original date of the work, in the 16 of Richard II. is preſerved. Indeed the only other alterations which I have been able to diſcover are toward the beginning and end, where every thing which had been ſaid in praiſe of Richard in the firſt edition, is either left out or converted to the uſe of his ſucceſſor.

(16) The hiſtory of Apollonius King of Tyre was ſuppoſed by Mark Welſer, when he printed it in 1595, to have been tranſlated from the Greek a thouſand years before. [*Fabr. Bib. Gr.* v. 6. p. 821.] It certainly bears ſtrong marks of a Greek original, though it is not (that I know) now extant in that language.

is there called) in the viiith book of the ſame work; ſo that if Chaucer really did not mean to reflect upon his old friend, his choice of theſe two inſtances was rather unlucky.

§ 15. *The Man of Lawe's Tale*, as I have juſt ſaid, is taken, with very little variation, from Gower, *Conf. Amant.* b. ii. If there could be any doubt, upon a curſory peruſal of the two Tales, which of them was written firſt, the following paſſage, I think,

ſage. The rythmical poem under the ſame title, in modern Greek, was retranſlated (if I may ſo ſpeak) from the Latin.---απο Λατινικης εις Ρωμαϊκην γλωσσαν. [*Du Freſne, Index Author. ad Gloſſ. Græc.*] When Welſer printed it, he probably did not know that it had been publiſhed already (perhaps more than once) among the *Geſta Romanorum*. In an edition which I have, printed at Rouen in 1521, it makes the 154th chapter. Toward the latter end of the 12th century, Godfrey of Viterbo, in his Pantheon, or univerſal Chronicle, inſerted this romance as part of the hiſtory of the third Antiochus, about 200 years before Chriſt. It begins thus, [*mſ. Reg.* 14 *C.* xi.]

Filia Seleuci regis ſtat clara decore
Matreque defuncta pater arſit in ejus amore.
Res habet effectum, preſſa puella dolet.

The reſt is in the ſame metre, with one pentameter only to two hexameters.---Gower, by his own acknowledgment, took his ſtory from the Pantheon, as the author (whoever he was) of Pericles Prince of Tyre profeſſes to have followed Gower.

is ſufficient to decide the queſtion. At ver. 5505 Chaucer ſays—

> Som men wold ſayn how that the child Maurice
> Doth this meſſage until this emperour---

and we read in Gower that Maurice is actually ſent upon this meſſage to the emperor. We may therefore fairly conclude that in this paſſage Chaucer alludes to Gower, who had treated the ſame ſubject before him, but, as he inſinuates, with leſs propriety.

I do not however ſuppoſe that Gower was the inventor of this Tale; it had probably paſſed through ſeveral hands before it came to him. I find among the *Cotton mſſ. Cal. A.* ii. fol. 69, an old Engliſh rhyme entitled *Emare*, in which the heroine under that name goes through a ſeries of adventures for the moſt part exactly ſimilar to thoſe of Conſtance (17): but neither was the author of this rhyme the inventor of the ſtory; for in fol. 70, *a*, he refers to his original *in Romans*, or French; and in the laſt ſtanza he tells us expreſsly———

> Thys ys on of *Brytayne layes*
> That was uſed by olde dayes.

Of

(17) The chief differences are, that Emarè is originally expoſed in a boat, for refuſing to comply with the inceſtuous deſires

Of the *Brytayne layes* I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more at large, when I come to The Frankelein's Tale.

§ 16. The Man of Lawe's Tale, in the beſt mſſ. is followed by the Wife of Bathe's Prologue and Tale, and therefore I have placed them ſo here: not however merely in compliance with authority, but becauſe, according to the common arrangement, in The Marchant's Tale (18) there is a direct reference to The Wife of Bathe's Prologue before it has been ſpoken. Such an impropriety I was glad

ſires of the emperor her father; that ſhe is driven on the coaſt of Galys or Wales, and married to the king of that country. The contrivances of the ſtepmother, and the conſequences of them, are the ſame in both ſtories.

(18) V. 9559, Juſtine ſays to his brother January------

> The Wif of Bathe, if ye han underſtonde,
> Of mariage, which ye han now in honde,
> Declared hath ful wel in litel ſpace———

alluding very plainly to this Prologue of the Wife of Bath. The impropriety of ſuch an alluſion in the mouth of Juſtine is groſs enough. The truth is, that Chaucer has inadvertently given to a character in The Merchant's Tale, an argument which the Merchant himſelf might naturally have uſed upon a ſimilar occaſion, after he had heard the Wife of Bath. If we ſuppoſe, with the editions, that the Wife of Bath had not at that time ſpoken her Prologue, the impropriety will be increaſed to an incredible degree.

to remove upon the authority of the beſt mſſ. though it had been acquieſced in by all former editors, eſpecially as the ſame mſſ. pointed out to me another (I believe the true) place for both The Marchant's and The Squier's Tales, which have hitherto been printed immediately after The Man of Lawe's. But of that hereafter.

§ 17. The want of a few lines to introduce *The Wife of Bathe's Prologue*, is perhaps one of thoſe defects hinted at above, which Chaucer would have ſupplied, if he had lived to finiſh his work. The extraordinary length of it, as well as the vein of pleaſantry that runs through it, is very ſuitable to the character of the ſpeaker. The greateſt part muſt have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly ſee that he had been reading the popular invectives againſt marriage and women in general, ſuch as *The Roman de la Roſe*, *Valerius ad Rufinum de non ducendâ uxore*, and particularly *Hieronymus contra Jovinianum* (19).

§ 18.

(19) The holy Father, by way of recommending celibacy, has exerted all his learning and eloquence (and he certainly was not deficient in either) to collect together and aggravate whatever he could find to the prejudice of the female ſex. Among other things, he has inſerted his own tranſlation (probably) of a long extract from what he calls——*liber aureolus Theophraſti de nuptiis*——

§ 18. *The Wife of Bathe's Tale* ſeems to have been taken from the ſtory of Florent in Gower, *Conf. Amant.* b. i. or perhaps from an older narrative in the *Geſta Romanorum*, or ſome ſuch collection, from which the ſtory of Florent was itſelf borrowed. However that may have been, it muſt be allowed that Chaucer has conſiderably improved the fable by lopping off ſome improbable as well as unneceſſary circumſtances; and the transferring of the ſcene from Sicily to the court of King Arthur, muſt have had a very pleaſing effect before the fabulous majeſty of that court was quite obliterated.

The old ballad entitled *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, [*Ancient Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 11] which the learned editor thinks may have furniſhed Chau-

tiis——Next to him in order of time was the treatiſe entitled *Epiſtola Valerii ad Ruſinum de non ducendâ uxore, mſ. Reg.* 12 *D.* iii. It has been printed (for the ſimilarity of its ſentiments, I ſuppoſe) among the works of St. Jerome, though it is evidently of a much later date. Tanner (from *Wood's mſ. Coll.*) attributes it to Walter Map, [*Bib. Brit.* v. *Map.*] I ſhould not believe it to be older, as John of Saliſbury, who has treated of the ſame ſubject in his *Polycrat.* l. viii. c. xi. does not appear to have ſeen it.——To theſe two books Jean de Meun has been obliged for ſome of the ſevereſt ſtrokes in his *Roman de la Roſe*; and Chaucer has transfuſed the quinteſſence of all the three works (upon the ſubject of matrimony) into his Wife of Bathe's Prologue and Merchant's Tale.

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cer with this Tale, I ſhould rather conjecture (with deference to ſo good a judge in theſe matters) to have been compoſed by one who had read both Gower and Chaucer.

§ 19. *The Tales of the Frere and the Sompnour* are well ingrafted upon that of The Wife of Bath. The ill humour which ſhews itſelf between thoſe two characters is quite natural, as no two profeſſions at that time were at more conſtant variance. The regular clergy, and particularly the Mendicant Freres, affected a total exemption from all eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, except that of the Pope, which made them exceedingly obnoxious to the biſhops, and of courſe to all the inferior officers of the national hierarchy.

I have not been able to trace either of theſe Tales to any author older than Chaucer, and poſſibly they may both have been built upon ſome traditional pleaſantries, which were never before committed to writing.—I am obliged to Mr. Steevens for pointing out to me a ſtory, which has a great reſemblance in its principal incidents to The Frere's Tale: it is quoted by D'Artigny, *Mémoires d'Hiſtoire*, &c. t. iii. p. 238, from a collection of ſermons by an anonymous Dominican, printed about the beginning of the 16th century, under the title of *Sermones Diſcipuli*.

§ 20.

§ 20. *The Clerke's Tale* is in a different ſtrain from the three preceding. He tells us in his Prologue, that he learned it from Petrarch at Padua; and this (by the way) is all the ground that I can find for the notion that Chaucer had ſeen Petrarch (20) in Italy. It

(20) I can find no older or better authority for this notion than the following paſſage in Speght's life of Chaucer, prefixed to the edition in 1597: "Some write that he with Petrarke was "preſent at the marriage of Lionell Duke of Clarence with Vio-"lante, daughter of Galeaſius Duke of Millaine; yet Paullus "Jovius nameth not Chaucer; but Petrarke, he ſayth, was "there." It appears from an inſtrument in Rymer, [*Liberat.* 42 Ed. III. m. 1] that the Duke of Clarence paſſed from Dover to Calais, in his way to Milan, in the ſpring of 1368, with a retinue of 457 men and 1280 horſes. That Chaucer might have attended the duke upon this occaſion is not impoſſible. He had been, probably, for ſome time in the king's ſervice, and had received the year before a grant of an annuity of 20 marks---"Pro bono ſervitio, quod dilectus Vallettus noſter, Galfridus "Chaucer, nobis impendit et impendet in futurum." [*Pat.* 41 Ed. III. p. 1. m. 13, *ap. Rymer.*] There is a curious account of the feaſt at this marriage in the *Chronica di Mantoua* of *Alipprandi*, [*Murator. Antiq. Med. Ævi*, vol. v. p. 1187, *et ſeq.*] but he does not give the names of the

Grandi Signori e Baroni Inghileſe,

who were (as he ſays)

Con Meſſere Lionell' in compagnia.

The moſt conſiderable of them were probably thoſe twenty-ſix (knights

It is not eaſy to ſay why Chaucer ſhould chooſe to own an obligation for this Tale to Petrarch rather than to Boccace, from whoſe Decameron, d. x. n. 10, it was tranſlated by Petrarch in 1373 (the year before his death), as appears by a remarkable letter which he

(knights and others) who, before their ſetting out for Milan, procured the king's licenſe to appoint attornies-general to act for them here. [*Franc.* 42 Ed. III. m. 8. *ap. Rymer.*] The name of Chaucer does not appear among them.----The embaſſy to Genoa, to which Chaucer was appointed in November 1372, might poſſibly have afforded him another opportunity of ſeeing Petrarch. But in the firſt place, it is uncertain whether he ever went upon that embaſſy. If he did, the diſtance from Genoa to Padua, where Petrarch reſided, is conſiderable; and I cannot help thinking, that a reverential viſit from a miniſter of the King of England would have been ſo flattering to the old man, that either he himſelf, or ſome of his biographers, muſt have recorded it. On the other hand, ſuppoſing Chaucer at Genoa, it is to be preſumed that he would not have been deterred by the difficulties of a much longer journey from paying his reſpects to the firſt literary character of the age: and it is remarkable, that the time of this embaſſy, in 1373, is the preciſe time at which he could have learned the ſtory of Griſeldis *from Petrarch at Padua*; for Petrarch, in all probability, made his tranſlation *in that very year*, and he died in July of the year following.---The inquiſitive and judicious author of *Mémoires pour la vie de Petrarque* gave us hopes [*Pref. to* t. ii. p. 6] that he would ſhew that Chaucer was in connection *(en liaiſon)* with Petrarch. As he has not fulfilled his promiſe in a later (I fear the laſt) volume of his very ingenious work, I ſuſpect that his more accurate reſearches have not enabled him to verify an opinion which he probably at firſt adopted upon the credit of ſome biographer of Chaucer.

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ſent with his tranſlation to Boccace. [*Opp. Petrarch.* p. 540—7, *edit. Baſ.* 1581.] It ſhould ſeem too from the ſame letter, that the ſtory was not invented by Boccace, for Petrarch ſays, "that it "had always pleaſed him *when he heard it many* "*years before*" (21), whereas he had not ſeen The Decameron till very lately.

§ 21. In the *ballade* with which the Clerk concludes his Tale, I have changed the order of the three laſt ſtanzas, ſo as to make it end—

And let him *care*, and *wepe*, and wringe, and *waile*—

(21)—"Cum et mihi ſemper *ante multos annos audita* pla-"cuiſſet, et tibi uſque adeo placuiſſe perpenderem, ut vulgari "eam ſtylo tuo cenſueris non indignam, et ſine operis, ubi rheto-"rum diſciplina validiora quælibet collocari jubet." *Petrarch. loc. cit.* M. l'Abbé de Sade [*Mem. de Petr.* t. iii. p. 797] ſays, that the ſtory of Griſeldis is taken from an ancient mſ. in the library of M. Foucault, entitled *Le Parement des Dames*. If this ſhould have been ſaid upon the authority of Manni, [*Iſt. del Decam.* p. 603] as I very much ſuſpect; and if Manni himſelf meant to refer to M. Galland's *Diſcours ſur quelques anciens Poetes*, [*Mem. de l'Acad. des I. et B. L.* t. ii. p. 686] we muſt look ſtill further for the original of Boccace's novel. M. Galland ſays nothing, as I obſerve, of the *antiquity* of the mſ. "Le titre," he ſays, "eſt *Le Parement des Dames*, avec des "explications en proſe, où l'on trouve l'hiſtoire de Griſelidis "que feu M. Perrault a miſe en vers:" but he ſays alſo expreſsly, that it was a work of Olivier de la Marche, who was not born till many years after the death of Boccace.

and

and immediately after I have placed *The Marchant's Prologue*, beginning——

> *Weping* and *wailing*, *care* and other ſorwe,
> I have enough.----

This arrangement, which recommends itſelf at firſt ſight, is alſo ſupported by ſo many mſſ. of the beſt authority, that, without great negligence or dulneſs, I could not have either overlooked or rejected it, eſpecially as the whole turn of The Marchant's Prologue, and the expreſs mention of Griſilde in ver. 9100, demonſtrate that he is ſuppoſed to ſpeak with The Clerke's Tale freſh in his memory.

§ 22. The ſcene of *The Marchant's Tale* is laid in Italy, but none of the names except Damian and Juſtin ſeem to be Italian, but rather made at pleaſure; ſo that I doubt whether the ſtory be really of Italian growth. The adventure of the *Pear-tree* I find in a ſmall collection of Latin fables, written by one Adolphus, in elegiack verſes of his faſhion, in the year 1315. As this fable has never been printed but once, and in a book not commonly to be met with, I ſhall tranſcribe below (22) the material parts of it, and

(22) *Adolphi Fabulæ, ap. Leyſer. Hiſt. Poet. Medii Ævi*, p. 2008.

Fabula

id I dare ſay the reader will not be very anxious to e any more.

Whatever

Fabula I.

Cæcus erat quidam, cui pulcra virago———

In curtis viridi reſident hi ceſpite quadam
Luce. Petit mulier robur adire Pyri.
Vir favet, amplectens mox robur ubique lacertis.
Arbor adunca fuit, qua latuit juvenis.
Amplexatur eam dans baſia dulcia. Terram
Incepit colere vomere cum proprio.
Audit vir ſtrepitum. nam ſæpe carentia ſenſus
Unius in reliquo, noſco, vigere ſolet.
Heu miſer! exclamat; te lædit adulter ibidem.
Conqueror hoc illi qui dedit eſſe mihi.
Tunc Deus omnipotens, qui condidit omnia verbo,
Qui ſua membra probat, vaſcla velut figulus,
Reſtituens aciem miſero, tonat illico; Fallax
Femina, cur tanta fraude nocere cupis?

Percipit illa virum. Vultu reſpondet alacri:
Magna dedi medicis; non tibi cura fuit.
Aſt, ubi luſtra ſua ſatis uda petebat Apollo,
Candida ſplendeſcens Cynthia luce mera,
Tunc ſopor irrepſit mea languida corpora: quædam
Aſtitit. inſonuit auribus illa meis.
Ludere cum juvene ſtudeas in roboris alto;
Priſca viro dabitur lux cito, crede mihi.
Quod feci. Dominus ideo tibi munera lucis
Contulit. idcirco munera redde mihi.
Addidit ille fidem mulieri, de prece cujus
Se ſanum credjt, mittit et omne neſas.

The ſame ſtory is inſerted among the Fables of Alphonſe, printed

Whatever was the real original of this Tale, the machinery of the Faeries, which Chaucer has uſed ſo happily, was probably added by himſelf; and indeed I cannot help thinking that his Pluto and Proſerpina were the true progenitors of Oberon and Titania (23), or rather that they themſelves have, once at leaſt, deigned to reviſit our poetical ſyſtem under the latter names.

§ 23. *The Prologue to The Squier's Tale* appears now for the firſt time in print. Why it has been omitted by all former editors I cannot gueſs, except, perhaps, becauſe it did not ſuit with the place which (for reaſons beſt known to themſelves) they were determined to aſſign to the Squier's Tale, that is, after The Man of Lawe's and before the Marchant's. I have choſen rather to follow the mſſ. of the beſt authority in placing *The Squier's Tale* after the Mar-

printed by Caxton in Engliſh, with thoſe of Æſop, Avian, and Pogge, without date; but I do not find it in the original Latin of Alphonſus, *mſ. Reg.* 10 *B.* xii. or in any of the French tranſlations of his work that I have examined.

(23) This obſervation is not meant to extend further than the King and Queen of Faery, in whoſe characters I think it is plain that Shakeſpeare, in imitation of Chaucer, has dignified our Gothick elves with the manners and language of the claſſical gods and goddeſſes. In the reſt of his Faery ſyſtem Shakeſpeare ſeems to have followed Drayton and the popular ſuperſtition of his own time.

chant's,

chant's, and in connecting them together by this Prologue, agreeably, as I am perſuaded, to Chaucer's intention. The lines which have uſually been printed by way of Prologue to the Squier's Tale, as I believe them to have been really compoſed by Chaucer, though not intended for the Squier's Prologue, I have prefixed to The Shipman's Tale, for reaſons which I ſhall give when I come to ſpeak of that Tale.

§ 24. I ſhould have been very happy if the mſſ. which have furniſhed The Squier's Prologue had ſupplied the deficient part of his Tale: but I fear the judgment of Milton was too true, that this ſtory was *left half-told* by the Author. I have never been able to diſcover the probable original of this Tale; and yet I ſhould be very hardly brought to believe, that the whole, or even any conſiderable part of it, was of Chaucer's invention.

§ 25. We are now arrived with the common editions (though by a different courſe) at The Frankeleine's Tale; and here again we muſt be obliged to the mſſ. not indeed, as in the laſt inſtance, for a *new* Prologue, but for authorizing us to prefix to this Tale of The Frankelein a Prologue which in the common editions is prefixed to The Tale of *the*

Marchant, together with the true Prologue of that Tale, as printed above. It is ſcarce conceivable how theſe two Prologues could ever be joined together, and given to the ſame character, as they are not only entirely unconnected, but alſo in one point directly contradictory to each other; for in that which is properly *the Marchant's*, he ſays expreſsly [ver. 9110], that he had been married *two monthes and not more*; whereas in the other, the ſpeaker's chief diſcourſe is about *his ſon*, who is *grown up*. This therefore, upon the authority of the beſt mſſ. I have reſtored to the Frankelein; and I muſt obſerve, that the ſentiments of it are much more ſuitable to his character than to that of the Marchant. It is quite natural that a wealthy landholder of a generous diſpoſition, as he is deſcribed [ver. 332—62], who has been Sheriff, Knight of the Shire, &c. ſhould be anxious to ſee his ſon (as we ſay) *a gentleman*, and that he ſhould talk ſlightingly of money in compariſon with poliſhed manners and virtuous endowments: but neither the character which Chaucer has drawn of his Marchant, nor our general notions of the profeſſion *at that time*, prepare us to expect from him ſo liberal a ſtrain of thinking.

§ 26. *The Frankelein's Tale*, as he tells us himſelf, is

is taken from a Britiſh lay (24); and the names of perſons and places, as well as the ſcene and circumſtances

(24) "Les premieres chanſons Françoiſes furent nommées "des Lais," ſays M. de la Ravaliere, *Poeſ. du Roi de Navv.* t. i. p. 215; and ſo far I believe he is right. But I ſee no foundation for ſuppoſing with him (in the ſame page) that the lay was *une ſorte d'élégie*, and that it was derived *du mot Latin* Leſſus, *qui ſignifie des plaintes*; or [in p. 217] that it was *la chanſon—la plus majeſtueuſe et la plus grave*. It ſeems more probable, that *lai* in French was anciently a generical term, anſwering to *ſong* in Engliſh. The paſſage which M. de la Ravaliere has quoted from *Le Brut*,

Molt ſot de *lais*, molt ſot de notes———

is thus rendered by our Layamon. [See the *Eſſay on the Language and Verſification of Chaucer*, n. 46.]

Ne cuthe na mon ſwa muchel of *ſong*.

The ſame word is uſed by Peirol d'Alvergna, *mſ. Croſts*, fol. 85, to denote the *ſongs of birds* (certainly not of the *plaintive* kind).

Et li auſell s'en van enamoran
L'uns per l'autre, et fan vantas (or *cantas*) et *lais*.

For my own part, I am inclined to believe that *liod*, Iſland. *lied*, Teuton. *leoth*, Saxon, and *lai*, French, are all to be deduced from the ſame Gothick original.---But beſide this general ſenſe, the name of *lay* was particularly given to the French tranſlations of certain poems originally compoſed in Armorican Bretagne, and in the Armorican language: I ſay *the French tranſlations*, becauſe *lay* not being (as I can find) an Armorican word, could hardly have been the name by which a ſpecies of poetry not im-

ſtances of the ſtory, make this account extremely probable. The lay itſelf is either loſt or buried (perhaps

ported from France was diſtinguiſhed by the firſt compoſers in Bretagne.——The chief (perhaps the only) collection of theſe *lais* that is now extant was tranſlated into French octoſyllable verſe, by a poeteſs who calls herſelf *Marie*, the ſame (without doubt) who made the tranſlation of *Eſope*, quoted by Paſquier [*Rech.* l. viii. ch. 1] and Fauchet [*L.* ii. n. 84], and placed by them in the reign of St. Louis, about the middle of the 13th century. Both her works have been preſerved together in *mſ. Harl.* 978, in a fair hand, which I ſee no reaſon to judge more recent than the latter end of that century.---The *lais* (with which only we are at preſent concerned) were addreſſed by her to ſome king, fol. 139.

En le honur de vous, *noble reis*,
Ki tant eſtes pruz e curteis,
A ki tute joie ſe encline,
E en ki quoer tuz biens racine,
M'entremis des *lais* aſſembler,
Par rime faire e reconter.——

A few lines after ſhe names herſelf,

Oez, Seignurs, ke dit *Marie*.——

The titles of the poems in this collection, to the number of twelve, are recited in the Harleian Catalogue: they are, in general, the names of the principal perſons in the ſeveral ſtories, and are moſt of them evidently Armorican; and I think no one can read the ſtories themſelves without being perſuaded that they were either really tranſlated from the Armorican language, or at leaſt compoſed by one who was well acquainted with that language

haps for ever) in one of thoſe ſepulchres of mſſ. which, by courteſy, are called Libraries. But there are

guage and country.------Though theſe poems of Marie have of late been ſo little known as to have entirely eſcaped the researches of Fauchet and other French antiquaries, they were formerly in high eſtimation. Denis Pyramus, a very tolerable verſifier of the Legend of St. Edmund the King [*mſ. Cotton, Dom. A.* xi.], allows that Dame Marie (as he calls her) had great merit in the compoſition of her lays, *though they are not all true*------

E ſi en eſt ele mult loee,
E la ryme par tut amee.

A tranſlation of her *lays* (as it ſhould ſeem) into one of the northern languages, was among the books given by Gabriel de la Gardie to the univerſity of Upſal, under the title of *Variæ Britannorum Fabulæ*. [See the deſcription of the book by Stephanius, in *Cat. Libb. Septent.* at the end of *Hickes, Gr. A. S. ed.* 1689, 4to, p. 180.] That Chaucer had read them I think extremely probable, not only from a paſſage in his Dreme [ver. 1820---1926], which ſeems to have been copied from the lay of Elidus, but alſo from the manner in which he makes the Frankelein ſpeak of the Bretons and their compoſitions. [See the note on ver. 11021.]---However, in Chaucer's time there were other Britiſh lays extant beſide this collection by Marie. Emarè has been mentioned before, § 15. An old Engliſh ballad of Sir Gowther [*mſ. Reg.* 17 *B.* xliii.] is ſaid by the writer to have been taken *out of one of the layes of Britanye*: in another place he ſays---*the firſt lay of Britanye*. The original of The Frankelein's Tale was probably a third. There were alſo lays which did not pretend to be Britiſh, as *Le Lay d'Ariſtote, Li Lais de l'Oiſelet*, [*Fabliaux, tom.* i.] *Le Lai du Corn*, by Robert Bikez,

are two imitations of it extant by Boccace, the firſt in the fifth book of his Philocopo, and the ſecond in The Decam. d. x. n. 5. They agree in every reſpect with each other, except that the ſcene and the names are different, and in the latter the narration is leſs prolix and the ſtyle leſs flowery than in the former, which was a juvenile work (25). The only material

[*mſ. Bod.* 1687] is ſaid by him to have been invented by Garaduc, who accompliſhed the adventure. In the ballad entitled *The Boy and the Mantle*, [*Anc. Poet.* v. iii. p. 1] which I ſuſpect to have been made up out of this lay and Le Court Mantel, the ſucceſsful knight is called Cradock. Robert Bikez ſays further, that the horn was ſtill to be ſeen at Cirenceſter;

Q'fuſt a *Cirincetre*
A une haute feſte,
La pureit il veer
Iceſt corn tout pur veir.
Ceo diſt *Robert Bikez*———.

In none of theſe lays do we find the qualities attributed to that ſort of compoſition by M. de la Ravaliere. According to theſe examples we ſhould rather define the lay to be a ſpecies of ſerious narrative poetry, of a moderate length, in a ſimple ſtyle and light metre. Serious is here oppoſed (not to pleaſant, but) to ludicrous, in order to diſtinguiſh the lay from the *conte* or *fabliau*; as on the other hand its moderate length diſtinguiſhes it from the *geſte*, or common *roman*. All the lays that I have ſeen are in light metre, not exceeding eight ſyllables. See the *Eſſay on the Language, &c. of Chaucer*, n. 60.

(25) I ſaw once an edition of the Philocopo, printed at Venice, 1503,

terial point in which Boccace ſeems to have departed from his original is this: inſtead of *the removal of the rockes*, the lady deſires *a garden, full of the flowers and fruits of May, in the month of January*; and ſome ſuch alteration was certainly neceſſary when the ſcene came to be removed from Bretagne to Spain and

1503, fol. with a letter at the end of it, in which the publiſher, Hieronymo Squarzaficho, ſays (if I do not miſremember) "that "this work was written by Boccace at twenty years of age "(about 1333), while he was at Naples in the houſe of John "Barrile." [Johannes Barrillus is called by Boccace [*Geneal. Deor.* l. xiv. c. 19] *magni ſpiritus homo.* He was ſent by King Robert to attend Petrarch to his coronation at Rome, and is introduced by the latter in his ſecond eclogue under the name of Idæus; "ab Idâ, monte Cretenſi, unde et ipſe oriundus fuit." *Intentiones Eclogarum Franc. Petrarchæ, mſ. Bod.* 558.] Not knowing at preſent where to find that edition, I am obliged to rely upon my memory only for this ſtory, which I think highly probable, though it is not mentioned (as I recollect) by any of the other biographers of Boccace. A good life of Boccace is ſtill much wanted.---The adventures of Florio and Biancofiore (which make the principal ſubject of the Philocopo) were famous long before Boccace, as he himſelf informs us, l. i. p. 6. edit. 1723. Floris and Blancaflor are mentioned as illuſtrious lovers by Matfres Eymengau de Bezers, a Languedocian poet, in his *Breviari d'amor*, dated in the year 1288, *mſ. Reg.* 19 *C.* i. fol. 199. It is probable however that the ſtory was enlarged by Boccace, and particularly I ſhould ſuppoſe that the Love-queſtions in l. v. (the fourth of which queſtions contains the novel referred to in the text) were added by him.

Italy, as it is in Boccace's novels (26). I ſhould gueſs that Chaucer has preſerved pretty faithfully the principal incidents of the Britiſh Tale, though he has probably thrown in ſome ſmaller circumſtances to embelliſh his narration. The long liſt of virtuous women in Dorigene's ſoliloquy is plainly copied from *Hieronymus contra Jovinianum.*

§ 27. Thus far I flatter myſelf I have been not unſucceſsful in reſtoring the true order and connection with each other of The Clerke's, The Marchante's, The Squiere's, and The Frankeleine's Tales: but with regard to the next ſtep which I have taken, I muſt own myſelf more dubious. In all the editions the Tales of The Nonne and The Chanone's Yeman precede The Doctoure's; but the beſt mſſ. agree in removing thoſe Tales to the end of The Nonne's Preeſte's; and I have not ſcrupled to adopt this arrangement, which, I think, is indiſputably eſtabliſhed by the following conſideration. When the Monk is called upon for his Tale, the

(26) The Conte Boiardo (the precurſor and model of Arioſto) in his *Orlando Inamorato*, l. i. ca. 12. has inſerted a tale upon the plan of Boccace's two novels, but with conſiderable alterations, which have carried the ſtory, I apprehend, ſtill further from its Britiſh original.

pilgrims

pilgrims were near Rocheſter [ver. 13932]; but when the Chanon overtakes them, they were advanced to Boughton-under-Blee [ver. 16024], twenty miles beyond Rocheſter; ſo that the Tale of The Chanone's Yeman, and that of The Nonne to which it is annexed, cannot with any propriety be admitted till after The Monke's Tale, and conſequently not till after The Nonne's Preeſte's, which is inſeparably linked to that of The Monk.

§ 28. Theſe two Tales therefore of The Nonne and The Chanone's Yeman being removed out of the way, The Doctoure's comes clearly next to The Frankeleine's: but how they are to be connected together, and whether at all, is a matter of doubt. What I have printed by way of Prologue to The Doctoure's Tale, I found in one of the beſt mſſ. but only in one; in the others it has no Prologue. The firſt line applies ſo naturally and ſmartly to the Frankeleine's concluſion, that I am ſtrongly inclined to believe it from the hand of Chaucer; but I cannot ſay ſo much for the five following: I would therefore only wiſh theſe lines to be received for the preſent (according to the law-phraſe) *de bene eſſe*, till they ſhall either be more authentically eſtabliſhed, or ſuperſeded by the diſcovery of the genuine Prologue.

§ 29.

§ 29. In *The Doctoure's Tale*, beſide Livy (who is quoted), Chaucer may poſſibly have followed Gower in ſome particulars, who has alſo related the ſtory of Virginia, *Conf. Amant.* b. vii. but he has not been a ſervile copyiſt of either of them.

§ 30. *The Pardonere's Tale* has a Prologue which connects it with The Doctoure's. There is alſo a pretty long preamble, which may either make part of the Prologue, or of the Tale. The mſſ. differ in this point. I have choſen to throw it into the Tale, and to confine the Prologue to what I ſuppoſe to be its proper uſe, the introduction of the new ſpeaker. When he is once in complete poſſeſſion of his office of entertaining the company, his prefaces or digreſſions ſhould all, I think, be equally conſidered as parts of his Tale.

The mere outline of *The Pardonere's Tale* is to be found in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. lxxxii.

§ 31. *The Tale of The Shipman* in the beſt mſſ. has no Prologue: what has been printed as ſuch in the common editions is evidently ſpurious. To ſupply this defect, I have ventured, upon the authority of one mſ. (and I confeſs not one of the beſt), to prefix to this Tale the Prologue which has uſually been prefixed to the Tale of the Squier. As this Prologue

was

was undoubtedly compoſed by Chaucer, it muſt have had a place ſomewhere in this edition; and if I cannot prove that it was really intended by him for this place, I think the reader will allow that it fills the vacancy extremely well. The Pardonere's Tale may very properly be called a *thrifty tale*, and he himſelf *a lerned man* [ver. 12905—8]; and all the latter part, though highly improper in the mouth of the *curteis Squier*, is perfectly ſuited to the character of the Shipman.

This Tale is generally ſuppoſed to be taken from The Decameron, d. viii. n. 1. but I ſhould rather believe that Chaucer was obliged to ſome old French *fableour*, from whom Boccace had alſo borrowed the ground-work of his novel, as in the caſe of The Reve's Tale. Upon either ſuppoſition, a great part of the incidents muſt probably have been of his own invention.

§ 32. The tranſition from the Tale of The Shipman to that of The Prioreſſe is happily managed. I have not been able to diſcover from what legende of The Miracles of our Lady The Prioreſſe's Tale is taken. From the ſcene being laid in Aſia, it ſhould ſeem that this was one of the oldeſt of the many ſtories which have been propagated at different times, to excite

excite or juſtify ſeveral mercileſs perſecutions of the Jews upon the charge of murdering Chriſtian children (27). The ſtory of Hugh of Lincoln, which is mentioned in the laſt ſtanza, is placed by Matthew Paris under the year 1255.

§ 33. Next to the Prioreſſe *Chaucer* himſelf is called upon for his Tale. In the Prologue he has dropped a few touches deſcriptive of his own perſon and manner, by which we learn that he was uſed to look much upon the ground, was of a corpulent habit, and reſerved in his behaviour. His *Rime of Sire*

(27) In the firſt four months of the *Acta Sanctorum*, by Bollandus, I find the following names of children canonized, as having been murdered by Jews: xxv Mart. Willielmus Norwicenſis. 1144. Richardus, Pariſiis. 1179. xvii Apr. Rudolphus, Bernæ. 1287. Wernerus, Weſaliæ. *an eod.* Albertus, Poloniæ. 1598. I ſuppoſe the remaining eight months would furniſh at leaſt as many more. See a Scottiſh ballad [*Rel. of Anc. Poet.* v. i. p. 32] upon one of theſe ſuppoſed murders. The editor has very ingeniouſly conjectured that *Mirryland*, in ver. 1, is a corruption of *Milan*. Perhaps the real occaſion of the ballad may have been what is ſaid to have happened at Trent, in 1475, to a boy called Simon. The Cardinal Hadrian, about fifty years after, mentioning the rocks of Trent, adds, "quo "Judæi *ob Simonis cædem* ne aſpirare quidem audent." *Præf. ad librum de Serm. Lat.* The change of the name in the ſong from Simon to Hugh is natural enough in *this* country, where ſimilar ſtories of Hugh of Norwich and Hugh of Lincoln had been long current.

Thopas

Thopas was clearly intended to ridicule the *palpable-groſs* fictions of the common rhymers of that age, and ſtill more, perhaps, the meanneſs of their language and verſification. It is full of phraſes taken from *Iſumbras*, *Li beaus deſconus*, and other romances in the ſame ſtyle, which are ſtill extant. A few of his imitations of them will be pointed out in the Notes.

§ 34. For the more complete reprobation of this ſpecies of rhyming, even the Hoſt, who is not to be ſuſpected of too refined a taſte, is made to cry out againſt it, and to cut ſhort Sire Thopas in the midſt of his adventures. Chaucer has nothing to ſay for his rhyme, but that *it is the beſte he can* [ver. 13856], and readily conſents to tell another Tale; but, having juſt laughed ſo freely at the bad poetry of his time, he might think it, perhaps, too invidious to exhibit a ſpecimen of better in his own perſon; and therefore his other Tale is in proſe, a mere tranſlation from *Le Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence*, of which ſeveral copies are ſtill preſerved in mſ. (28).

(28) Two copies of this work are in the Muſeum, *mſſ. Reg.* 19 *C.* vii. and 19 *C.* xi. in French proſe. Du Freſnoy, *Biblioth. des Romans*, v. ii. p. 248, mentions two copies of the ſame work *en vers, dans la Bibliotheque Seguier.*

It

It is in truth, as he calls it [ver. 13868], *a moral tale vertuous*, and was probably much eſteemed in its time: but in this age of levity, I doubt ſome readers will be apt to regret that he did not rather give us the remainder of Sire Thopas.

§ 35. *The Prologue of The Monke's Tale* connects it with Melibee. The Tale itſelf is certainly formed upon the plan of Boccace's great work, *De caſibus Virorum Illuſtrium:* but Chaucer has taken the ſeveral ſtories of which it is compoſed from different authors, who will be particularized in the Notes.

§ 36. After a reaſonable number of melancholy ditties, or tragedies, as the Monk calls them, he is interrupted by the Knight, and the Hoſt addreſſes himſelf to the Nonne's Preeſt to tell them *ſwiche thing as may* their *hertes glade.*

The Tale of the Nonne's Preeſt is cited by Dryden, together with that of The Wife of Bath, as of Chaucer's own invention. But that great poet was not very converſant with the authors of which Chaucer's library ſeems to have been compoſed. The Wife of Bathe's Tale has been ſhewn above to be taken from Gower; and the fable of the Cock and the Fox, which makes the ground of The Nonne's Preeſte's Tale, is clearly borrowed from a collection of Æſopean

pean and other fables by Marie, a French poeteſs, whoſe collection of lays has been mentioned before in n. 24. As her fable is ſhort and well told, and has never been printed, I ſhall inſert it here at length (29), and the more willingly, becauſe it furniſhes a convincing

(29) From *mſ. Harl.* 978. f. 76.

D un cok recunte, ki eſtot
Sur un femer, e ſi chantot.
Par de lez li vient un gupilz,
Si l'apela par muz beaus diz.
Sire, fet il, muz te vei bel;
Unc ne vi ſi gent oiſel.
Clere voiz as ſur tute rien,
Fors tun pere, qe jo vi bien;
Unc oiſel meuz ne chanta;
Mes il le fiſt meuz, kar il cluna.
Si puis jeo fere, diſt li cocs.
Les eles bat, les oilz ad clos,
Chanter quida plus clerement,
Li gupil ſaut, e ſil prent;
Vers la foreſt od lui s'en va.
Par mi un champ, u il paſſa,
Curent apres tut li paſtur;
Li chiens le huent tut entur.
Veit le gupill, ki le cok tient,
Mar le guaina ſi par eus vient.
Va, fet li cocs, ſi lur eſcrie,
Qe ſui tuens, ne me larras mie.
Li gupil volt parler en haut,
E li cocs de ſa buche ſaut.
Sur un haut fuſt s'eſt muntez.
Quant li gupilz s'eſt reguardez,

Mut

convincing proof how able Chaucer was to work up an excellent Tale out of very ſmall materials.

§ 37.

Mut par ſe tient enfantillé,
Que li cocs l'ad ſi enginné.
De mal talent e de droit ire
La buche commence a maudire,
Ke parole quant devereit taire.
Li cocs reſpunt, ſi dei jeo faire,
Maudire l'oil, ki volt cluiner,
Quant il deit guarder e guaiter,
Que mal ne vient a lur Seignur.
Ceo funt li fol tut li pluſur,
Parolent quant deivent taiſer,
Teiſent quant il deivent parler.

The reſemblance of Chaucer's Tale to this fable is obvious; and it is the more probable that he really copied from Marie, becauſe no ſuch fable is to be found either in the Greek Æſop, or in any of the Latin compilations (that I have ſeen) which went about in the dark ages under the name of Æſop. Whether it was invented by Marie, or whether ſhe tranſlated it, with the reſt of her fables, from the Anglo-Saxon verſion of Æſop by King Alfred (as ſhe ſays herſelf), I cannot pretend to determine. Though no Anglo-Saxon verſion of Æſop be now (as I can find) extant, there may have been one formerly, which may have paſſed, like many other tranſlations into that language, under the name of Alfred; and it may be urged in ſupport of the probability of Marie's poſitive aſſertion, that ſhe appears, from paſſages in her *lais*, to have had ſome knowledge of Engliſh. I muſt obſerve, that the name of the king, whoſe Engliſh verſion ſhe profeſſes to follow, is differently ſtated in different mſſ. In the beſt mſ. *Harl.* 978, it is plainly *Li reis Alured*; in a later mſ. *Veſp.* B. xiv. it is *Li reis Henris*. Paſquier [*Recherches*, l. viii. c. i.] calls him *Li roy Auuert*; and Du Cheſne (as quoted by Menage, v. *Roman*)

§ 37. The ſixteen lines, which are printed at the end of The Nonne's Preeſte's Tale, might perhaps more properly be conſidered as the beginning of the Prologue to the ſucceeding Tale, if it were certain what Tale was intended to ſucceed. In both Dr. Aſkew's mſſ. the laſt of theſe lines is read thus,—

Seide unto the *Nunne* as ye ſhul heer------

and there are ſix more lines to introduce her Tale: but, as theſe ſix lines are manifeſtly forged for the purpoſe, I have choſen rather to adhere to the other mſſ. which acknowledge themſelves defective in this part, and give us The Nonne's Tale, as I have done, without any introduction. It is very probable, I think, that Chaucer himſelf had not determined whether he ſhould connect The Nonne's Tale with that of The Nonne's Preeſt, or whether he ſhould interpoſe a Tale or two, or perhaps more, between them.

The Tale of the Nonne is almoſt literally tranſlated from the life of St. Cecilia in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus Januenſis. It is mentioned by Chaucer as a ſeparate work in his Legende of Good Women [ver.

v. *Roman*) *Li rois Mires*: but all the copies agree in making Marie declare that ſhe tranſlated her work *de l'Anglois en Roman*. A Latin Æſop, *mſ. Reg.* 15 *A.* vii. has the ſame ſtory of an Engliſh verſion by order of a *Rex Angliæ Affrus*.

426], under the title of *The Life of Seint Cecile*, and it ſtill retains evident marks that it was not originally compoſed in the form of a Tale to be *ſpoken* by *the Nonne* (30). However, there can be no doubt that Chaucer meant to incorporate it into this collection of Canterbury Tales, as the Prologue of the Chanone's Yeman expreſsly refers to it.

§ 38. The introduction of *The Chanone's Yeman* to tell a Tale, at a time when ſo many of the original characters remain to be called upon, appears a little extraordinary. It ſhould ſeem that ſome ſudden reſentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular courſe of his Work, in order to infert a ſatire againſt the alchemiſts. That their pretended ſcience was much cultivated about this time (31), and produced

(30) The whole introduction is in the ſtyle of a perſon writing, and not of one ſpeaking. If we compare it with the introduction to The Prioreſſe's Tale, the difference will be very ſtriking. See particularly ver. 15546;

Yet pray I you that *reden* that I *write*——

and in ver. 15530 the relater, or rather writer of the Tale, in all the mſſ. (except one of middling authority) is called *a worthy ſon of Eve*. Such little inaccuracies are ſtrong proofs of an unfiniſhed work. See before, p. 76.

(31) The firſt conſiderable coinage of gold in this country was

duced its uſual evils, may fairly be inferred from the act which was paſſed ſoon after, 5 Hen. IV. c. iv. to make

was begun by Edward III. in the year 1343, and according to Camden [in his *Remains, art. Money*], "the alchemiſts did affirm (as an unwritten verity) that the Roſenobles, which were coined ſoon after, were made by projection or multiplication alchemical of Raymond Lully in the Tower of London." In proof of this, "beſides the tradition of the rabbies in that faculty," they alledged "the inſcription; *Jeſus autem tranſiens per medium eorum ibat*;" which they profoundly expounded, *as Jeſus paſſed inviſible and in moſt ſecret manner by the middeſt of Phariſees, ſo that gold was made by inviſible and ſecret art amidſt the ignorant*. But others ſay that text was the only amulet uſed in that credulous warfaring age to eſcape dangers in battles. Thus Camden. I rather believe it was an amulet, or charm, principally uſed againſt thieves, upon the authority of the following paſſage of Sir John Mandevile, c. x. p. 137: "And an half myle fro Nazarethe is the lepe of oure Lord; for the Jewes ladden him upon an highe roche for to make him lepe down and have ſlayn him: but Jeſu paſſed amonges hem, and lepte upon another roche; and yit ben the ſteppes of his feet ſene in the roche where he allyghte. And therfore ſeyn ſum men whan thei dreden hem of theſes on ony weye, or of enemyes, *Jeſus autem tranſiens per medium illorum ibat*; that is to ſeyne, *Jeſus forſothe paſſynge be the myddes of hem he wente*; in tokene and mynde that oure Lord paſſed thorghe out the Jewes crueltee, and ſcaped ſafly fro hem; *ſo ſurely mowe men paſſen the perile of theſes*." See alſo *Catal. mſſ. Harl.* n. 2966. It muſt be owned that a ſpell againſt thieves was the moſt ſerviceable, if not the moſt elegant, inſcription that could be put upon gold coin.---Aſhmole, in his *Theatrum Chemicum*, p. 443, has repeated this ridiculous ſtory concerning Lully, with

make it felonie *to multiplie gold or ſilver, or to uſe the art of multiplication.*

§ 39. In the *Prologue to The Manciple's Tale* the pilgrims are ſuppoſed to be arrived at a little town called *Bob-up-and-down, Under-the-Blee, in Canterbury-way.* I cannot find a town of that name in any map; but it muſt have lain between Boughton (the place laſt mentioned) and Canterbury. The fable of the Crow, which is the ſubject of *The Manciple's Tale*, has been related by ſo many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impoſſible to ſay whom Chaucer principally followed. His ſkill in new-dreſſing an old ſtory was never perhaps more ſucceſsfully exerted.

additional circumſtances, as if he really believed it; though Lully, by the beſt accounts, had been dead above twenty years before Edward III. began to coin gold.---The ſame author (*Mercuriophilus Anglicus*, as he ſtyles himſelf) has inſerted among his *Hermetique Myſteries* [p. 213] an old Engliſh poem under the title of *Hermes Bird*, which (he ſays in his Notes, p. 467) was thought to have been written originally by Raymund Lully, or at leaſt made Engliſh by Cremer [*Abbot of Weſtminſter, and ſcholar to Lully*, p. 465]. The truth is, that the poem is one of Lydgate's, and had been printed by Caxton under its true title, *The Chorle and the Bird*; and the fable on which it is built is related by Petrus Alphonſus [*de Clericali Diſciplinâ, mſſ. Reg.* 10 B. xii.], who lived above two hundred years before Lully.

§ 40.

§ 40. After the Tale of the Manciple, the common editions, ſince 1542 (32), place what is called The

(32) In the edition of 1542, when The Plowman's Tale was firſt printed, it was placed *after* The Perſon's Tale. The editor, whoever he was, had not aſſurance enough (it ſhould ſeem) to thruſt it into the body of the Work. In the ſubſequent editions however, as it had probably been well received by the publick, upon account of its violent invectives againſt the church of Rome, it was advanced to a more honourable ſtation, next to The Manciple's Tale, and *before* The Perſon's. The only account which we have of any mſ. of this Tale is from Mr. Speght, who ſays [Note prefixed to Plowman's Tale] that he had "ſeene it in written hand in John Stowe's librarie in a booke of ſuch antiquitie as ſeemed to have been written neare to Chaucer's time." He does not ſay that it was *among The Canterbury Tales*, or that it had *Chaucer's name* to it. We can therefore only judge of it by the internal evidence, and upon that I have no ſcruple to declare my own opinion, that it has not the leaſt reſemblance to Chaucer's manner either of writing or thinking in his other Works. Though he and Boccace have laughed at ſome of the abuſes of religion, and the diſorders of eccleſiaſtical perſons, it is quite incredible that either of them, or even Wickliff himſelf, would have railed at the whole government of the church in the ſtyle of this Plowman's Tale. If they had been diſpoſed to ſuch an attempt, their times would not have borne it. But it is probable that Chaucer (though he has been preſſed into the ſervice of Proteſtantiſm by ſome zealous writers) was as good a Catholick as men of his underſtanding and rank in life have generally been. The neceſſity of auricular confeſſion, one of the great ſcandals of Popery, cannot be more ſtrongly inculcated than it is in the following Tale of the Perſon.------I will juſt obſerve that Spenſer ſeems to ſpeak of the

The Plowman's Tale: but as I cannot underſtand that there is the leaſt ground of evidence, either external or internal, for believing it to be a work of Chaucer's, I have not admitted it into this edition.

§ 41. *The Perſone's Prologue* therefore is here placed next to The Manciple's Tale, agreeably to all the mſſ. which are known, and to every edition before 1542. In this Prologue, which introduces the laſt Tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day: but the hour by the clock is very differently repreſented in the mſſ. In ſome it is *ten*, in others *two*, in moſt of the beſt mſſ. *four*, and in one *five*. Ac-

author of The Plowman's Tale as a diſtinct perſon from Chaucer, though (in compliance I ſuppoſe with the taſte of his age) he puts them both on the ſame footing. In the epilogue to The Shepherd's Calendar, he ſays to his book---

> Dare not to match thy pipe with *Tityrus* his ſtile,
> Nor with the Pilgrim that *the Ploughman* plaid awhile.

I know that Mr. Warton (in his excellent Obſervations on Spenſer, v. i. p. 125) ſuppoſes this paſſage to refer to the Viſions of Pierce Ploughman: but my reaſon for differing from him is, that the author of the Viſions never, as I remember, ſpeaks of himſelf in the character of a Ploughman.------Of the Pilgrim's Tale, which has alſo, with as little foundation, been attributed to Chaucer [*Speght's Life of Chaucer*], I ſhall ſpeak in another place.

cording

cording to the phænomena here mentioned, the ſun being 29° high, and the length of the ſhadow to the projecting body as 11 to 6, it was *between four and five.* As by this reckoning there were at leaſt three hours left to ſunſet, one does not well ſee with what propriety the Hoſt admoniſhes the Perſon to *haſte him*, becauſe *the ſonne wol adoun*, and to be *fructuous in litel ſpace*; and indeed the Perſon (knowing probably how much time he had good) ſeems to have paid not the leaſt regard to his admonition; for his Tale (if it may be ſo called) is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in ſome mſſ. *Tractatus de Pœnitentiâ, pro Fabulâ, ut dicitur, Rectoris*; and I much ſuſpect that it is a tranſlation of ſome ſuch treatiſe. I cannot recommend it as a very entertaining or edifying performance at this day: but the reader will be pleaſed to remember, in excuſe both of Chaucer and his editor, that, conſidering The Canterbury Tales as a great picture of life and manners, the piece would not have been complete, if it had not included the religion of the time.

§ 42. What is commonly called *The Retractation*, at the end of The Perſon's Tale, in ſeveral mſſ. makes part of that Tale; and certainly the appellation of *Litel Tretiſe* ſuits better with a ſingle Tale

than with ſuch a voluminous work as the whole body of Canterbury Tales: but then, on the other hand, the recital which is made in one part of it of ſeveral compoſitions of Chaucer, could properly be made by nobody but himſelf. I have printed it as I found it *in mſ. Aſk.* i. with a few corrections from other mſſ. and in the notes I ſhall give the beſt account that I can of it.

Having thus gone through the ſeveral parts of The Canterbury Tales which are printed in this edition, it may not be improper, in the concluſion of this Diſcourſe, to ſtate ſhortly the parts which are wanting to complete the journey *to* Canterbury. Of the reſt of Chaucer's intended plan (as has been ſaid before) we have nothing. Suppoſing therefore the number of the pilgrims to have been *twenty-nine* [ſee before, § 6], and allowing the Tale of the Chanone's Yeman to ſtand in the place of that which we had a right to expect from the Knighte's Yeman, the Tales wanting will be only thoſe of the *five* City-mechanicks and the Ploughman. It is not likely that the Tales told by ſuch characters would have been among the moſt valuable of the ſet; but they might, and probably would, have ſerved to link together thoſe which at preſent are unconnected; and for that reaſon it is much

much to be regretted that they either have been loſt, or (as I rather believe) were never finiſhed by the Author (33).

(33) When we recollect that Chaucer's papers muſt in all probability have fallen into the hands of his ſon Thomas, who at the time of his father's death was of ſuch age and diſcretion as to be made Speaker of the Houſe of Commons in the very next year, we can hardly doubt that all proper care was taken of them; and if the Tales in queſtion had ever been inſerted among the others, it is ſcarce conceivable that they ſhould all have ſlipt out of all the copies of this Work, of which we have any knowledge or information. Nor is there any ſufficient ground for imagining that ſo many Tales could have been ſuppreſſed by deſign, though ſuch a ſuppoſition may perhaps be admitted to account for the loſs of ſome ſmaller paſſages. See above, n. 8.

CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN April, ſoft'ning, ſheds refreſhing ſhow'rs,
And frees from droughty March the ſpringing flow'rs;
April! that bathes the teeming womb of earth,
And gives to vegetation kindly birth:
When Zephyr breathes the gale that favours love,
And cheriſhes the growth of ev'ry grove;
Zephyr! that miniſters, with genial breeze,
Bloom to the ſhrubs, and verdure to the trees:
When youthful Phœbus half his courſe completes,
Divides the Ram, and glows with temp'rate heats;
Phœbus! our equal good, the live-long year,
Or ſhould he take, or ſhould he quit the ſphere:
When Philomel enjoys the coming Spring,
And, feeling her approach, delights to ſing;
Sweet Philomel! of all the birds that fly,
The ſole to paſs the night with ſleepleſs eye:

Then

Then pilgrims long to roam to foreign lands;
Then palmers paſs, with branches in their hands;
Then various vot'ries viſit various climes;
Then ſundry ſaints are fee'd for ſundry crimes.
But not abroad our Engliſh zealots ſtroll;
To Canterbury tend the pious ſhoal.
There pay, and promiſe to the ſaint inſhrin'd,
For ev'ry ail of body, and of mind.
It ſo befell, that ſeaſon, on a day,
In Southwark, at the Tabarde-Inn, I lay;
Ready by morn my progreſs to purſue:
A pilgrimage to ſee, was all my view.
When at our inn, before the fall of night,
Lo! twenty-nine in fellowſhip alight:
Strangers, that chanc'd in company to fall;
Unlike the men, but pilgrims they were all.
To Canterbury each propos'd to ride—
The houſe was roomy, and the ſtables wide:
Well ſerv'd was ev'ry beaſt, and ev'ry gueſt,
And man and horſe were treated with the beſt.
I talk'd with each, with each familiar grew,
Was one with all before the ſun withdrew:
And one and all agreed, at dawn of day,
To Canterbury town to take their way.

But

But here it falls in ſeaſon and in place,
That company with play keep pace with pace.
Then, ere we ſally, take, as I deſcribe,
The characters of all our pilgrim-tribe;
Juſt what they were, or what they ſeem'd to me,
Their age or ſex, their faſhion, or degree,
In what array, or what condition in:
This granted; with the Knight I firſt begin.

CHARACTERS

OF THE

PILGRIMS.

THE KNIGHT.

A Knight there was, whoſe early youth had ſhown
His love to arms, and paſſion for renown.
Courteous and affable, of honour nice,
A friend to truth, a foe to ev'ry vice.
In many brave engagements had he been,
Known foreign courts, and men and manners ſeen.
In Chriſtendom much fame he had acquir'd;
In Turkey he was dreaded and admir'd.
When Alexandria was beſieg'd and won,
He paſs'd the trenches firſt, and ſcal'd the town.
Granada's ſiege increas'd the warrior's fame,
And Algier trembled but to hear his name:
In fifteen battles deathleſs wreaths he got,
Three ſingle combats with ſucceſs he fought.

Much

Much ground he travell'd o'er, for he had ſeen
Our Saviour's ſepulchre in Paleſtine.
The barb'rous Infidels had felt his might;
Fierce in engagement, gentle after fight.
In council and in conduct, wiſe and ſtay'd;
In converſation, modeſt as a maid;
Plain and ſincere, obſervant of the right;
In mien and manners, an accompliſh'd knight.
A goodly horſe he rode, well ſhap'd and ſtrong,
No gaudy ſaddle, nor no trappings long.
The arms he wore were bright, and free from ſtain;
His habit ſerviceable, neat and plain:
With grateful zeal, devoutly he was come
To thank the ſaint, that brought him ſafely home.

THE SQUIRE.

WITH him his ſon, a ſprightly Squire, and gay;
Youthful and blooming as the month of May;
A fearleſs lover, in a courtly dreſs,
With curling locks, juſt taken from the preſs.
Of twenty years he ſeem'd, well ſhap'd and tall,
Strong was his make, his port majeſtical.
The army did his early courage ſee
In Flanders, and in fertile Picardy.
He hop'd his valour would all forms remove,
And plead ſucceſsfully its maſter's love.
His veſt with various colours did abound,
Like flow'ry meads, when ſpring adorns the ground.
Short was his coat, the ſleeves were long and wide;
Well could he ſing, and treats and balls provide.
His fiery ſteed he gracefully would ſit;
Love-ſongs he made, not wholly void of wit.
Some ſkill in painting too the youth had ſhown,
Could draw a miſtreſs, or deſign a town;
Love o'er his gentle heart did ſo prevail,
He ſlept as little as the nightingale.

THE

THE SQUIRE's YEOMAN.

THIS Squire a Yeoman had, and only him,
Whoſe truth and diligence deſerv'd eſteem:
Girt with a belt, his garment was of green;
A quiver, ſtor'd with arrows bright and keen,
Hung croſs his ſhoulders in a ſilken ſtring,
The feathers borrow'd from the peacock's wing.
At his left ſide a weighty ſword he wore,
And on his arm a well-tried buckler bore:
A dagger, ſhort and broad, was tied below;
His ſtrong right hand ſuſtain'd a mighty bow.
A Chriſtopher his boſom did adorn,
In a fair baldrick hung his ſilver horn.
His ſun-burnt viſage, and his graſs-green hood,
Might prove him well a ranger of the wood.

THE PRIORESS.

THERE was with theſe a Nun, a Prioreſs,
A lady of no ord'nary addreſs.
Her ſmiles were harmleſs, and her look was coy;
She never ſwore an oath, but by St. Loye;
Known by the name of lady Eglantine—
She ſung the office with a grace divine.
She ſpoke the French of Stratford-School, by Bow;
The French of Paris ſhe did never know.
The French of Paris did to her appear
Strange as our Law-French to a Frenchman's ear.
At meals ſhe ſat demure, carv'd neat, and well,
No morſel from her lips unſeemly fell.
She never dipp'd her finger in the meſs,
Nor with one drop defil'd her holy dreſs:
With a becoming grace and ſmiling eye,
She gain'd reſpect from all the company;
Eaſy and free, ſtill pleaſant at her meat,
And held it no ſmall pain to counterfeit.
She hated ſtatelineſs, yet wiſely knew
What fit regard was to her title due.
She pity'd ev'ry creature in diſtreſs,
Devout, and charitable to exceſs;

Her

Her tender heart with ſuch compaſſion fill'd,
She'd weep to ſee a poor mouſe caught and kill'd.
Her lap-dogs ſtill with her fair hand ſhe fed,
With milk, and roaſt-meat, mixt with crumbs of bread:
In her own chamber, on her bed they ſlept;
If any died, moſt bitterly ſhe wept.
Well ſet her wimple, nicely pinch'd it was;
Her noſe was ſtraight, her eyes were grey as glaſs.
Small was her mouth, her lips were red and ſoft;
A beauteous forehead always borne aloft;
Broad, ſmooth and ſhining eye-brows, neat and ſmall,
A ſlender waiſt, inclining to be tall.
A curious garment, wondrous neat, ſhe wore;
A pair of beads, with green enamell'd o'er,
Of ſhining coral, did her arm infold,
Grac'd with an ornament of beaten gold.
Upon it was engrav'd a circling wreath,
And * *amor vincit omnia* writ beneath.
A Nun, who ſeldom from her ſight did ſtir,
Her chaplain, and three Prieſts attended her.

* Love ſubdueth all things.

THE MONK.

NEXT theſe a merry Monk appears in place,
Who follow'd hunting more than ſaying maſs.
As bravely mounted as a lord from court;
No well-fed abbot bore a comelier port:
And when in ſtate he ambled, all might hear
The jingling of his bridle, loud and clear,
As far almoſt as any chapel bell.
This lordly monk, once keeper of a cell,
Held good St. Bennet's order too ſevere;
St Maure to his nice judgment did appear
Too ſtrict and rigid, for old dotards fit,
But ſcorn'd by prieſts of ſpirit and of wit.
One ſcripture-text he blotted with his pen,
That ſays, all hunters are ungodly men.
What ſhoals of converts would this doctrine raiſe!
Shall monks in ſtudy paſs laborious days?
Turn o'er dull fathers, and worm-eaten books,
With dazzled eyes, and melancholy looks;
Toil with their hands to make the garden neat,
Turn cooks, and baſte the roaſt with their own ſweat?
This Auſtin humbly did; Did he? (faith he)
Auſtin may do the ſame again for me.

He

He lov'd the chace, the hounds' melodious cry,
Hounds that ran ſwiftly as the ſwallows fly.
His ſleeves, I ſaw, with furs all lin'd within,
From Ruſſia brought, the fineſt ſquirrels ſkin;
(Hair ſhirts, he ſaid, provok'd the blood to ſin.)
His hood beneath, his double chin to hold,
'Twas faſten'd with a curious claſp of gold.
A love-knot at the greater end there was;
His head cloſe ſhav'd, and ſmooth as any glaſs:
His ſtrutting paunch was ſeldom diſappointed;
His broad full face ſhone as it were anointed.
His eyes were ſleepy, rolling in his head,
That ſteam'd like furnaces of molten lead.
Supple his boots, his horſe he proudly ſate;
You'd take him for a biſhop by his ſtate:
Faſts had not made him meagre like a ghoſt,
But fat he was, and goodly as mine hoſt.
A fat plump ſwan he lov'd, young, but full grown;
His horſe was ſleek, and as the berry brown.

THE FRYAR.

A Fryar next, to ev'ry female dear,
All the four orders never had his peer.
Wanton, diverting ſtill in proſe or rhime,
He many couples married in his time;
Some young ones at his own expence he wed,
And, to their huſbands' grief, ſoon brought to bed.
A frank companion, ſecret, often tried,
To gentle dames a confeſſor and guide;
Licentiate of his order once, and then,
For one the curate had, he ſhrifted ten:
He with a ſmile would their confeſſion hear,
No ſoul had cauſe his penances to fear.
His abſolutions pleaſant, ſoft and mild;
He ſtroak'd 'em as a parent does his child.
To a poor order lib'ral ladies fly,
With golden preſents eaſy penance buy:
For man is obſtinate, and hard of heart;
He keeps his money, though he feels the ſmart.
But to poor Fryars you muſt ſilver give,
'Tis not with pray'rs and faſting they can live.
He ſtitch'd within his tippet pretty knives,
With ſilver pins, ſmall preſents for kind wives.

In

cheerful company he ſung all day;
help his voice, could on the cittern play:
arms were brawny, few ſuch weights could fling,
ong as a champion for an Engliſh king.
inns and taverns in the town he knew,
t from the poor he prudently withdrew;
rich and lib'ral penitents inclin'd,
thoſe was meek, and of an humble mind;
ne in appearance more devout could be,
e ableſt beggar of his houſe was he:
farm'd that income, and procur'd a grant,
holy brother ſhould diſturb his haunt.
arſe was his habit when a begging Fryar,
wanton love-days gorgeous his attire.
fineſt cloth was then his demi-cope,
mendicant, but ſtately as a pope.
nething he humm'd betwixt a liſp and ſong,
make his Engliſh ſweet upon his tongue;
little pigs-eyes gave unequal light,
e ſmall ſtars twinkling in a froſty night.
good wives chuckled, whereſoe'er he came,
ſeful Fry'r, and Hubert was his name.

THE MERCHANT.

WITH theſe a merchant in a motley coat,
Well mounted too, and bearded like a goat;
A Flanders beaver on his head he wore;
His boots were neatly buckled on before:
He prov'd with reaſons ſtrong, and formal face,
T' increaſe in wealth was to increaſe in grace;
Greedy of gold, and popular eſteem,
He wiſh'd the ſea were ſhut to all but him.
Traffick in money he had ſtudy'd well,
Knew where th' exchange would riſe, and where it fell:
In debt to none, in bargains ſtrict and nice;
Thought unprompt payment was the greateſt vice.
What he with pains had got, with care he'd ſave,
Not charitable, for he ſeldom gave.

THE

CLERK OR SCHOLAR OF OXFORD.

A Clerk of Oxford next appear'd in ſight,
Who ſpent on logic many a day and night.
Lank as a rake, the ſteed on which he ſat;
And, ſooth to ſay, the man was nothing fat.
Of aſpect ſober, as of body lean;
Effect of contemplation more than ſpleen.
Hollow his veſt, and thread-bare was his coat,
A youth of worth he look'd, though not of note.
For he nor benefice had got, nor cure,
No patron yet ſo worldly to inſure!
So dextrous yet, of body, or of face,
To circumvent no chaplain with his grace:
Nor fulſome dedication could he write;
Drudge for a dame, or pander for a knight!
Much rather had he range, beſide his bed,
A ſcore of authors unadorn'd in red,
With Ariſtotle, champion of the ſchools;
To mend his ways, by philoſophic rules;
Than baſely to a vic'rage owe his riſe,
By courting folly, or by flatt'ring vice;

Than

THE MAN OF LAW, &c.

A Serjeant of the law, diſcreet, preciſe,
Well could he plead at bar, and well adviſe;
Wealthy he was, but frugal of expence,
And his ſage look demanded reverence.
Weighty his arguments, his words were wiſe;
Oft he had ſat as judge at an aſſize:
There by commiſſion rais'd to high degree,
Maturely weigh'd out juſtice equally.
Robes for the bench he had, and for the bar;
No ſerjeant was a greater purchaſer;
If ſafe the title, moderate the price,
A good fee-ſimple never came amiſs.
He for a very buſy man did paſs,
And yet he ſeem'd much buſier than he was.
Whole ſhoals of clients in the term he had;
And law enough to make thoſe clients mad.
All his conveyances were legal, true;
No flaw was found in any thing he drew.
The ſtatutes of the land he had by heart,
Turn'd all to gold without the chymiſt's art.
In a plain motley coat he rode, tied faſt
With a ſtrip'd ſilken ſaſh about his waiſt.

THE

THE FRANKLIN,

OR, COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

A Franklin was the Serjeant's chief delight;
His beard was long, and as the daiſy white.
Sanguine he was, and ſtudy'd pleaſure moſt;
His morning's draught, ſack with a nut-brown toaſt.
All delicates, that money could procure,
He had; a nice luxurious epicure.
With fiſh and fowl, with bak'd meat and with roaſt,
His table groan'd; he valu'd not the coſt.
All rarities the nation could afford
Were ſearch'd, and bought to fill his ample board.
In ev'ry ſeaſon delicates appear,
Diverſify'd each quarter of the year.
Hare, partridge, pheaſant, ever were at hand,
Carp, tench, and bream, as ready at command;
With poignant ſauces proper for each diſh:
Woe to the cook, were any thing amiſs.
Spacious his hall, and open was the door,
Fragments and marrow-bones beſpread the floor;
And, ready cover'd with all ſorts of food,
All the long day a table dormant ſtood.

This

This worthy Franklin bore a purſe of ſilk,
Fixt to his girdle, white as morning milk.
Knight of the ſhire; firſt juſtice at th' aſſize,
To help the poor, the doubtful to adviſe.
In all employments, gen'rous, juſt he prov'd,
Renown'd for courteſy, by all belov'd.

THE

HABERDASHER, WEAVER, CARPENTER, DYER, TAP'STRY-MERCHANT.

AN Haberdaſher next, a portly wight;
Sleek was his beaver, as a ſheriff's white;
A Weaver follow'd, dextrous to command
The ſliding ſhuttle, thrown from hand to hand;
A Carpenter, that well could play his part
Thro' all the weapons of the plaining art;
A Dyer, that ev'ry colour knew to ſtain,
Or change anew, though ne'er ſo deep in grain;
A Tap'ſtry-Merchant laſt, whoſe web might paſs
Leſs for the work of London, than Aras:
All of a livery, each for other made,
All ſolemn brothers, diff'ring but in trade;
One ſtamp of mind their very forms expreſs'd,
Same ſhap'd, like fac'd, like manner'd, and ſame dreſt.
Freſh were their clothes, nor bought at trivial coſt,
So freſh, no part its Chriſtmas gloſs had loſt.
Worn only on the hours to feaſt or pray,
And dormant ev'ry common-letter'd day.

No

No vulgar daggers, vamp'd with braſs, they wore,
But trimm'd with ſilver of the fineſt ore.
With ſilver ſtitch'd the pouches by their ſide,
The belts, that gird their loins, with ſilver tied.
A fair and ample burgeſs, one and all,
And fit to fill the tables of Guildhall;
Or when they meet to traffic, or to feaſt:
For each was ſiz'd an alderman at leaſt.
Staunch ſtood their city-ſhops in good repair,
And neat their boxes built for country air;
Where ſtill, to breathe, on Saturdays they went;
For large their ſtock in trade, as well as rent:
Of which their wives were not a little proud,
And puſh'd the foremoſt in the Sunday crowd.
Nor would we here their worldly wiſdom blame;
Reſpect from all ſuperior riches claim;
And though an aukward, 'tis a pleaſant ſight,
To ſee the buſtling dame aſſert her right;
Full of the money torn from the diſtreſt,
Conceit herſelf a thing above the reſt.
Madam! my lady! ſeems a glorious ſound!
When loftily ſhe moves, to vigils bound;
With mantle borne before, and train behind:
For wealth gives pow'r of face, and pride of mind.

THE COOK.

WITH them, a trav'ling Cook they jointly led,
(For thriving cits are delicately fed)
Well ſkill'd in all the culinary toil,
The chick, juſt cackling in the ſhell, to boil;
The cypreſs root to ſhred and preſs with art;
To lay the cuſtard, and to raiſe the tart;
To powder marchant, ev'ry game to roaſt;
To melt the marrow, and to brown the toaſt;
To ſeaſon and to lard; to grill and fry;
To pound the mortrey, and to bake the pie.
Great harm it was, (for much it ſlack'd his pace)
A mormal on his ſhin had taken place;
And, ſorely griev'd, the blemiſh I deſcry'd:
But what his legs refus'd, his hands ſupply'd.
Of palate exquiſite; of labour free;
A kitchen doctor in the firſt degree,
The food to cater, or the diſh to fill;
Blanc-mange was held his maſter-piece of ſkill.

THE SHIPMAN,

OR, SEAMAN, &c.

THEN came a Dartmouth Seaman far from weſt,
A very awkward rider at the beſt.
A coarſe cloth gown he wore, not long, nor wide;
His dagger in a lace adorn'd his ſide.
He knew thoſe ſultry climates, where the ſun
Turn'd his complexion to a duſky brown.
To company and mirth he did incline,
Had ſwallow'd many a draught of Bourdeaux wine;
Kept an obedient ſeaman's conſcience,
Held borrowing from his owners no offence.
If 'twas his fate to take a lucky prize,
(For ſtoutly he would fight) he was ſo wiſe
To pick the beſt, which ſent by parcels home,
Little of worth did to the office come.
A perfect maſter of the compaſs, he
Could ſhun each rock and ſhallow in the ſea;
Had weather'd tempeſts, in engagements been,
'Scap'd many dangers, many countries ſeen;
Knew ev'ry creek and harbour on the main,
Of England, Scotland, and the coaſt of Spain.
In many fights his frigate much was fam'd,
The Magdalene of England it was nam'd.

THE

THE DOCTOR OF PHYSIC.

THE Doctor next; a foe to all exceſs,
Who travell'd more for health than holineſs.
In nice anatomy well ſkill'd was he,
And not a ſtranger to aſtronomy.
He knew to wire-draw a diſtemper well,
And cures by magic natural foretel:
A deep aſtrologer, and could with eaſe
Caſt the nativity of each diſeaſe;
Show at what punctual hour it ſhould expire,
In terms which knaves invent, and fools admire.
The cauſe of every malady he knew,
Whether of cold, heat, moiſt, or dry it grew;
Told which of thoſe engender'd the diſeaſe,
'Twas but removing that, and you'd have eaſe.
Th' apothecary waited his command,
Drugs and electuaries were ſtill at hand:
Whatever one preſcrib'd, the other made,
And each by turns advanc'd the mutual trade.
He'd tell the wonders wrought by Phœbus' ſon,
What fame the great Hippocrates had won:
Well read in Galen, Celſus, Avicene,
In Dioſcorides and Damaſcene.

Theſe names, and many more, he had by rote,
Which to th' unlearn'd he never fail'd to quote.
No Bible on his pagan ſhelves had he,
It was prohibited the laity.
In diet ſingular; young, tender meat,
And eaſy of digeſtion, he would eat.
At a rich patient's table, bold and free;
But at his own, he prais'd frugality.
Of ſcarlet Perſian ſilk his habit was,
And neatly lin'd with taffety, or gauze.
Great were his gains, but mod'rate his expence;
He flouriſh'd in a time of peſtilence.
Gold's the beſt cordial; yet he lov'd to ſee
Coin'd *aurum*, rather than *potabile*.

THE WIFE OF BATH.

A Merry Wife of Bath comes next in place,
But ſomewhat deaf, with an autumnal face;
By trade a weaver, one who ſcorn'd to grant
Her work out-done at Ypres, or at Gaunt.
No matron could with greater zeal incline
To pay her off'ring at the Martyr's ſhrine.
She neither patient, nor devout could be,
If any rival'd her in charity.
In her own pariſh ſhe would take the wall,
Before the proudeſt matron of 'em all.
Upon a Sunday ever trimly dreſt,
She flaunted forth the envy of the reſt:
Large were her kerchiefs, yet more gorgeous made
With her own work, and full three pound they weigh'd.
Scarlet her hoſe, her gloſſy ſhoes were new;
Bold was her face, and ruddy was its hue.
Not one of her five huſbands could be found;
She lay'd 'em ſafe long ſince in holy ground.
With theſe ſhe made a ſhift to paſs her youth;
Such was this good wife's conſtancy and truth!
She travell'd far, paſs'd many a rapid ſtream;
Thrice ſaw the reliques of Jeruſalem:

Rome and the catacombs ſhe knew full well;
Strange things of Cologne and its kings could tell:
Spain ſhe had travell'd o'er from end to end,
And good St. James was very much her friend.
Of various haps and perils by the way,
Much had ſhe known, and yet much more would ſay.
Upon an ambling pad at eaſe ſhe ſat,
Jingling the bit, and ſlack'd her pace to chat.
A ſteeple hat ſhe wore upon her head,
Whoſe ample brims were like a buckler ſpread;
O'er her large hips a mantle fairly wrought
Before; her kerchief to a point was brought;
Like a rank rider, pointed ſpurs ſhe wore;
Of jeſts ſhe had an unexhauſted ſtore:
Her talk did notably love's art advance,
For ſhe had practis'd long that old new dance.

THE PARSON.

A Pariſh Prieſt was of the pilgrim-train,
An awful, rev'rend, and religious man:
His eyes diffus'd a venerable grace,
And charity itſelf was in his face.
Rich was his ſoul, th o' his attire was poor;
(As God had cloth'd his own ambaſſador)
For ſuch on earth his bleſs'd Redeemer bore.
Of ſixty years he ſeem'd; and well might laſt
To ſixty more, but that he liv'd too faſt;
Refin'd himſelf to ſoul, to curb the ſenſe,
And made almoſt a ſin of abſtinence.
Yet had his aſpect nothing of ſevere,
But ſuch a face as promis'd him ſincere:
Nothing reſerv'd or ſullen was to ſee;
But ſweet regards, and pleaſing ſanctity:
Mild was his accent, and his action free.
With eloquence innate his tongue was arm'd;
Tho' harſh the precept, yet the preacher charm'd:
For letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the ſky:
And oft with holy hymns he charm'd their ears:
(A muſic more melodious than the ſpheres)

For David left him, when he went to reſt,
His lyre; and after him he ſung the beſt.
He bore his great commiſſion in his look;
But ſweetly temper'd awe, and ſoften'd all he ſpoke.
He preach'd the joys of heav'n, and pains of hell,
And warn'd the ſinner with becoming zeal;
But on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell.
He taught the Goſpel, rather than the Law;
And forc'd himſelf to drive, but lov'd to draw:
For fear but freezes minds; but love, like heat,
Exhales the ſoul ſublime to ſeek her native ſeat.
To threats the ſtubborn ſinner oft is hard;
Wrapp'd in his crimes, againſt the ſtorm prepar'd:
But when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.
Lightning and thunder (Heav'n's artillery)
As harbingers before th' Almighty fly:
Thoſe but proclaim his ſtile, and diſappear;
The ſtiller ſound ſucceeds, and God is there.
The tithes his pariſh freely paid, he took;
But never ſu'd, or curs'd with bell and book:
With patience bearing wrong, but off'ring none,
Since ev'ry man is free to loſe his own.

The

The country churls, according to their kind,
(Who grudge their dues, and love to be behind)
The leſs he ſought his off'rings, pinch'd the more,
And prais'd a prieſt contented to be poor.
Yet of his little he had ſome to ſpare,
To feed the famiſh'd, and to clothe the bare:
For mortify'd he was to that degree,
A poorer than himſelf he would not ſee.
True prieſts, he ſaid, and preachers of the word,
Were only ſtewards of their Sov'reign Lord;
Nothing was theirs, but all the public ſtore;
Intruſted riches to relieve the poor;
Who, ſhould they ſteal for want of his relief,
He judg'd himſelf accomplice with the thief.
Wide was his pariſh, not contracted cloſe!
In ſtreets, but here and there a ſtraggling houſe;
Yet ſtill he was at hand, without requeſt,
To ſerve the ſick, or ſuccour the diſtreſs'd;
Tempting on foot, alone, without affright,
The dangers of a dark tempeſtuous night.
All this the good old man perform'd alone,
Nor ſpar'd his pains, for curate he had none.
Nor durſt he truſt another with his care;
Nor rode himſelf to Paul's, the public fair,

To

To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
Where biſhoprics and ſinecures are ſold:
But duly watch'd his flock by night and day,
And from the prowling wolf redeem'd the prey,
And hungry ſent the wily fox away.
The proud he tam'd, the penitent he cheer'd;
Nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd.
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought;
(A living ſermon of the truths he taught)
For this, by rules ſevere his life he ſquar'd,
That all might ſee the doctrine which they heard:
For prieſts, he ſaid, are patterns for the reſt;
(The gold of heav'n, who bear the God impreſs'd)
But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
The Sov'reign's image is no longer ſeen.
If they be foul on whom the people truſt,
Well may the baſer braſs contract a ruſt.
The prelate, for his holy life, he priz'd;
The worldly pomp of prelacy deſpis'd.
His Saviour came not with a gaudy ſhow,
Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
Patience ~~in~~ want, and poverty of mind,
Theſe marks of church and churchmen he deſign'd,
And living taught, and dying left behind.

The

The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn;
In purple he was crucify'd, not born.
They who contend for place and high degree,
Are not his ſons, but thoſe of Zebedee.
Not but he knew the ſigns of earthly pow'r
Might well become Saint Peter's ſucceſſor:
The holy Father holds a double reign;
The prince may keep his pomp, the fiſher muſt be plain.
Such was the Saint, who ſhone with ev'ry grace,
Reflecting, Moſes-like, his Maker's face.
God ſaw his image lively was expreſs'd;
And his own work, as in creation, bleſs'd.
The Tempter ſaw him too, with envious eye;
And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.
He took the time when Richard was depos'd,
And high and low with happy Harry clos'd.
This prince, though great in arms, the prieſt withſtood.
Near though he was, yet not the next of blood.
Had Richard unconſtrain'd reſign'd the throne;
A king can give no more than is his own:
The title ſtood entail'd, had Richard had a ſon.
Conqueſt, an odious name, was laid aſide;
Where all ſubmitted, none the battle tried.

The

The ſenſeleſs plea of right by providence
Was by a flatt'ring prieſt invented ſince,
And laſts no longer than the preſent ſway,
But juſtifies the next who comes in play.
The people's right remains; let thoſe who dare,
Diſpute their pow'r, when they the judges are.
He join'd not in their choice, becauſe he knew
Worſe might, and often did, from change enſue.
Much to himſelf he thought, but little ſpoke;
And, undepriv'd, his benefice forſook.
Now through the land his cure of ſouls he ſtretch'd,
And like a primitive apoſtle preach'd;
Still cheerful; ever conſtant to his call;
By many follow'd; lov'd by moſt, admir'd by all.
With what he begg'd, his brethren he reliev'd;
And gave the charities himſelf receiv'd.
Gave, while he taught, and edify'd the more,
Becauſe he ſhew'd by proof 'twas eaſy to be poor.
He went not with the crowd to ſee a ſhrine;
But fed us by the way with food divine.
In def'rence to his virtues, I might ſpare
To ſhow you what the reſt in orders were:
This brilliant is ſo ſpotleſs and ſo bright,
He needs no foil; but ſhines by his own proper light.

THE

THE PLOWMAN, &c.

A Plowman follow'd, who had ſtill at hand
Loads of manure t' enrich the grateful land;
An able, ſtrong, laborious man was he,
Who liv'd with all in perfect charity:
He ſerv'd God faithfully, nor hoarded pelf,
But lov'd his neighbour equal with himſelf.
Hard would he work, and freely would he give;
And oft, for God's ſake, did the poor relieve:
In dealing juſt, with loſſes not diſmay'd;
In every kind his tithes he duly paid.
In a ſhort coat he rode without a ſleeve:
There was beſide a Miller and a Reve,
A Sumner, and a Pardon-monger too,
A Steward, and myſelf, were all the crew.

THE MANCIPLE,

OR, TEMPLE-TREASURER.

A Steward of the Temple next muſt come,
A pattern for all caterers in town.
The price of every thing each market had
He knew, and nicely pick'd the good from bad.
Sometimes he went on truſt, and ſometimes paid,
Yet none could over-reach him in his trade.
Some wonder much, how an unletter'd man,
Of ſuch low, ſordid education, can
(Who is but one to more than three times ten)
O'er-reach ſo many grave, wiſe, learned men.
A practis'd lawyer all things underſtands:
Th' affairs of half the nation paſs their hands.
We praiſe unjuſtly, partially condemn;
As they cheat others, others cozen them.
By various methods all profeſſions live,
By their wiſe management he learn'd to thrive.
In life's long courſe ſuch diff'rent ways we run,
Some to undo, but moſt to be undone.

THE SUMNER,

OR, APPARITOR.

THIS Sumner was not overſtock'd with grace,
He had a bloated, broad, cherubic face,
Of fiery hue, with hollow eyes and narrow,
Red as a cock, and lech'rous as a ſparrow:
Black were his eye-brows, briſtled was his beard,
And much the children his ſtern viſage fear'd.
His noſe with carbuncles was overſpread;
His cheeks with white welks on a ground of red.
No inward med'cine he could e'er procure
Had pow'r ſufficient to effect their cure.
Not new quickſilver, with ceruſe too,
Brimſtone, nor oil of tartar, aught could do.
Strong bloody wine he lov'd, and well-dreſs'd fiſh,
And ſtunk of garlick like a Spaniſh diſh.
When he was drunk, he'd talk a man to death,
And belch out Latin with unſav'ry breath.
Two or three common fragments he could ſay;
No wonder, for he heard it all the day.
But if you preſs'd him farther, you might ſee
A ſudden end of his philoſophy.

A lewd

A lewd young fellow, for a quart of wine,
Might for a twelvemonth have his concubine.
He taught his looſe companions, in their ſport,
T' evade the cenſure of th' archdeacon's court.
But if a rich libid'nous prize he found,
Him he inclos'd within his bawdy pound.
This, as no vulgar ſecret, he would tell,
A large full purſe is the archdeacon's hell.
If rich men's ſouls within their purſes lie,
'Tis juſt their ſins be puniſh'd there, ſay I.
To him all wenches in the biſhop's ſee
Paid public tribute, or a private fee.
Boldly he rode, a garland on his head,
Of all unmarry'd men and maids the dread.

THE PARDONER.

A Pardon-Monger laſt brought up the rear,
With patriarchal face and holy leer.
His hair was of the hue of yellow wax,
Straight and unequal as a ſtriek of flax;
Yet long and thin it grew from his large head,
And all his brawny ſhoulders overſpread;
Divided into parcels here and there:
No gaudy hood conceal'd his golden hair;
For that with care was in his wallet laid,
Where many curioſities he had.
Except a little cap, he rode all bare,
With glaring eyes, like a new-ſtarted hare:
A holy figure ſtitch'd upon his cap;
His wallet hung before him on his lap,
Stuff'd and cramm'd full of pardons, newly come,
For greedy zealots, piping hot from Rome.
Shrill was his voice as any mountain goat;
Aloud he ſaid his oriſons by rote.
A beard he never had, nor e'er will have;
No barber took the pains that chin to ſhave.
He might have been a gelding or a mare;
But never ſure, from Berwick e'en to Ware,

Was Pard'ner furniſh'd with ſuch precious geer:
For in his male he had a pillow-bier,
Which piouſly was thought our lady's veil:
He kept beſide a gobbet of the ſail
Which Peter had (and now this Pard'ner hath)
When Chriſt rebuked him for little faith.
A croſs he ſhow'd of tin ſet full of ſtones,
And in a glaſs a number of pigs bones.
With theſe more pardons daily he'd diſpenſe,
In one poor village would collect more pence,
(As by record too plainly does appear)
Than a poor parſon lab'ring all the year.
Then, with feign'd flatteries and holy tools,
He made the parſon and the people fools.
Howe'er, to tell the truth juſt as it ſtood,
He ſeem'd in church eccleſiaſtic good.
A leſſon he could read, or tell a ſtory,
And roar the pſalter with no little glory.
But beſt of all, an offertory ſung,
So loud, ſo cheerful, that the chapel rung.
This gain'd him pence from the deluded crowd,
Therefore he ſung ſo cheerful and ſo loud.

PRO-

PROLOGUE

TO THE

KNIGHT's TALE.

WHAT needs there more our pilgrims to deſcribe,
Our Southwark gueſts? a mix'd, but merry tribe:
Their various looks and talents to diſplay?
Their ſex and age? their number and array?
Whom pious zeal, or faſhionable courſe,
Drew from their homes, here reſting man and horſe:
Here well to reſt, as trav'lers witneſs well;
A friendly houſe; the Tabarde by the Bell.
And here it falls in order to recite,
Firſt, how in ſocial cheer we paſs'd the night:
Next how, with common voice, and early day,
Our troop to Canterbury took their way:
And laſt the progreſs of our pilgrims tell,
With each adventure duly as it fell.
But let me firſt your due indulgence claim,
Leſt this my freedom you unjuſtly blame;
Where looſe the ſubject, or where rude the ſpeech:
For we pretend to copy, not to teach.

Who tells another's tale, in verſe or proſe,
Nigh as he can ſhould every word diſcloſe;
For be it ne'er ſo wanton, or at large,
Such are the facts, and you muſt give the charge.
This rule infring'd (by law and reaſon known)
The tale is not another's, but your own.
All evidence is ſtrict, all trial plain;
A witneſs ſhould repeat, but never feign.
If new the conduct, or the language new,
The ſtamp re-touch'd, the coinage is untrue.
To this, whate'er the ſtandard ſenſe affords,
Requires exact ſimilitude of words.
Apt words are ſhap'd fix'd objects to expreſs,
For language is no more than nature's dreſs.
If ſome, that love's exalted colours wear,
Capriciouſly offend the virtuous ear;
Or heedleſsly the virgin cheek inflame,
'Tis faulty modeſty, miſtaken ſhame.
If right the laws that free-born tongues enſlave,
And force to veil what nature public gave,
Then nature err'd, deform'd the human frame
With parts diſhoneſt, horrible to name!
But that great nature err'd, who dares pretend?
Why ſhould the juſt deſcription then offend?

Form'd

Form'd by the wiſeſt plan each part is found,
And voice was giv'n to fit each part to ſound.
Hence various words, by well-tun'd accents wrought,
Stamp on the ears the figures of the thought,
And fix the airy progreſs ere it flies,
As painting is the language of the eyes.
The ſkilful artiſt, lab'ring to diſplay
The bright effulgence of meridian day,
With ſtrongeſt colours ſtrikes the burniſh'd light,
The darker ſhades reſerv'd for ſullen night.
The poet thus that treats of am'rous wile,
Or wanton theft, muſt heighten all his ſtyle,
To raiſe warm paſſions, warm deſcriptions raiſe,
And keep for cooler ſenſe the cooler phraſe;
Nor arbitrary deem theſe ſtated rules,
The random doctrines of illib'ral ſchools:
The beſt philoſophers like tenets hold,
Chriſtian and heathen! both the new and old.
Read Plato; Plato ſays (if thou canſt read)
"The word muſt be adapted to the deed:"
And oft full broad the phraſe of holy writ;
Heathen and Chriſtian muſt this truth admit.
Others perhaps, with happier talents bleſt,
Our breach of due decorum may conteſt:

In poems well diſpos'd they may maintain,
Rank ſhould be kept, as in a public train;
And none too forward, none too backward ſtand;
But band with due diſtinctions follow band.
" Nor rank, nor file, our rude militia mind,
" Some ſtray, 'tis true, before, and ſome behind."
If this excuſe not, on the truth we reſt,
" Low was our genius, and we did our beſt:
" And though a fault, (I ſpeak without offence)
" Yet ſure a venial fault, is want of ſenſe."
But to return. Great joy our Hoſt expreſs'd,
Thrice heartily he welcom'd ev'ry gueſt;
And goodly cheer prepar'd with equal haſte;
(He of two ills had rather pray than faſt.)
Nor leſs the plague or comfort of his life,
Judge as ye liſt, his buſy-ſtirring wife.
Anon was ſupper ſerv'd, and neatly dreſt,
In ſeaſon ev'ry diſh, and of the beſt.
Strong was the ale, with toaſt and nutmeg crown'd:
Pure was the wine; and both went briſkly round.
Frank was our Hoſt; a comely man withal,
A marſhal fit for any noble hall;
Where many a graceleſs page is left in charge:
Round was his body, nor more round than large.

His

His ſturdy legs, though ſlow, juſt meaſure keep:
A fairer burgeſs never trod the Cheap.
Though bold of ſpeech, yet not more bold than wiſe;
His wits awake, and watchful as his eyes:
Loud when he laugh'd, and hearty when he ſpoke:
His voice was mirth; his very look a joke.
When now the rage of hunger was allay'd;
And, what more joy'd our Hoſt, our reck'ning paid,
" Thrice welcome (he began) both great and ſmall!
" Bright lords and ladies fair! thrice welcome all!
" Full many a noon has paſs'd, full many a night,
" Since in this inn appear'd ſo brave a fight.
" A braver never wiſh theſe eyes to ſee!
" Such gueſts! ſo full of honour and of glee!
" Fain would I raiſe your mirth, had I but ſkill;
" Or were my talent equal to my will.
" Yet let not the intent be wholly loſt;
" I mean not here to pleaſe you at your coſt.
" To Canterbury early you proceed;
" And may the bliſsful ſaint your wiſhes ſpeed!
" But if the good and bad you juſtly weigh,
" Long muſt the road, and tedious ſeem the day;
" For 'tis but dull to travel, you muſt own,
" Mute as a fiſh, and ſenſeleſs as a ſtone.

" Be mine ſuch luckleſs ſilence to prevent;
" Attend but my award with one conſent.
" For, by my father's body, long ſince dead,
" Mirth you ſhall have, at forfeit of my head:
" If none my wiſh too wilfully withſtands,
" In witneſs of your minds hold up your hands!"
Here waiting the event, he ceas'd to ſpeak;
Our gen'ral counſel was not long to ſeek:
For why ſhould we reject his honeſt ſuit,
The purport far from worthy the diſpute?
We vote the journey as he ſhould adviſe;
In trivial things 'tis fooliſh to be wiſe.
Then thus our Hoſt his ſpeech renew'd again:
" The point, ye nobles, take not in diſdain.
" The road to ſhorten, and deceive the day,
" (For mirth makes mirth, and play gives riſe to play)
" I will, that each by turns two ſtories tell,
" Of ſtrange adventures which of old befel:
" One ere you reach Saint Thomas' ſacred ſhrine;
" And one ere you regain the Tabarde ſign.
" Then farther be it ſolemnly agreed,
" That he that in his place ſhall beſt ſucceed;
" Whoſe cloſe is held moſt juſt, whoſe phraſe moſt fit,
" For profit or delight, for ſenſe or wit;

" His

" His be a ſupper at the common coſt,
" Here, in this hoſt'ry, ſitting by this poſt.
" And more, to aid your ſport, myſelf will ride,
" And be at once your governor and guide;
" Content the ſhar'd expences to maintain;
" Not grudgingly: ſuch company is gain.
" But firſt enact, that he that diſobeys
" My will, the common charge, convicted, pays.
" This is my verdict. Ere we further go,
" Paſs ſentence, one and all; your aye, or no!"
Conſent from one and all the queſtion bore;
And jointly, as our Hoſt requir'd, we ſwore.
Nay more; we vote him in the chair of ſtate,
Sole umpire of the tales we ſhould relate.
Submiſs in all to follow his advice,
We fix a ſupper at a ſtated price.
Pleas'd was our Hoſt; ſucceſs improves deſign:
Pleas'd were the gueſts; and loud they call'd for wine.
Smooth ev'ry brow, and eaſy every breaſt;
Each took his cordial draught, and went to reſt.
When ſcarce the bluſhing morn had ſtreak'd the ſkies
With earlieſt day, our Hoſt began to riſe;
And ſtraight his gueſts he gather'd in a flock,
As ſtirs his common mates the feather'd cock.

Then

Then forth we ſallied with an eaſy pace,
Some low of ſpirits, ſober moſt of face;
Till jointly to the ſacred ford we came,
Known, good Saint Thomas, by thy guardian name.
There, at thy ſtream, to many a thirſty ſteed
Free giv'n, our hoſt forbade us to proceed;
And, ſilencing awhile his jingling bit,
Arreſts his horſe; all readily ſubmit,
And circle him around on ev'ry ſide;
When loud as any chanter thus he cry'd:
" As morning ſong and ev'ning ſong agree,
" Both high and low attend to my decree;
" Pay here ſuch duty as by vote you paſs'd,
" Then ſweetly ſhall we chime from firſt to laſt.
" Be this the ſpot to caſt the foremoſt tale;
" And may theſe lips nor reliſh wine nor ale,
" (What more I dread, or dread not leſs than death;
" For want of liquor is like want of breath)
" As he that dares againſt my will offend,
" Pays all, (for thus you ſwore) that all expend.
" Now chance decide, who loſes, or who wins:
" Who draws the ſhorteſt lot, the firſt begins.
" Sir Knight, he ſaid, my maſter and my lord,
" Draw forth—I mean your fortune, not your ſword!
" And

" And gentle dame, with one accord appear;
" Come near, my Lady Prioreſs, come near!
" And you, Sir Clerk, look up, take heart of grace;
" Put off that book-learn'd baſhfulneſs of face:
" And males and females, all alike lay hand:"
And all alike ſubmit to his command.
Suffice, that on the Knight the forfeit fell;
Or were it chance, or fate, who knows may tell:
Nor know we, nor can tell; yet, for the beſt,
Suppoſe it fortun'd. Glad were all the reſt;
As, though not freed, yet of their burthen eas'd:
Nor ſeem'd the noble Knight in look diſpleas'd,
Or griev'd in thought: the noble Knight was wiſe:
Whether concern he cover'd with diſguiſe,
Or from experience had acquir'd content:
For care is vain, unleſs it can prevent.
" If then by me the ſport muſt be begun,
" Thrice welcome lot (he ſaid), not loſt, but won!
" Then ride and liſten, to the crowd he cry'd;"
And at the word we liſten as we ride:
While, nor with vulgar ſpeech, nor geſture rude,
This tale of love and honour he purſu'd.

PALA-

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

OR, THE

KNIGHT's TALE.

IN days of old there liv'd, of mighty fame,
A valiant prince, and Theſeus was his name:
A chief, who more in feats of arms excell'd,
The riſing nor the ſetting ſun beheld:
Of Athens he was lord; much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown:
In Scythia with the warrior queen he ſtrove,
Whom firſt by force he conquer'd, then by love.
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her ſiſter, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theſeus ride,
With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his ſide.
I paſs their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their ſhouts, their ſongs, their welcome on the way:
But were it not too long, I would recite
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy Queen and hero Knight;

The

The town beſieg'd, and how much blood it coſt
The female army, and th' Athenian hoſt;
The ſpouſals of Hippolyta the queen;
What tilts and turneys at the feaſt were ſeen;
The ſtorm at their return, the ladies fear:
But theſe, and other things, I muſt forbear.
The field is ſpacious I deſign to ſow,
With oxen far unfit to draw the plough:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waſte my ſtrength;
And trivial accidents ſhall be forborne,
That others may have time to take their turn;
As was at firſt enjoin'd us by mine Hoſt;
That he whoſe tale is beſt, and pleaſes moſt,
Should win his ſupper at our common coſt.
And therefore, where I left I will purſue,
This ancient ſtory, whether falſe or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The prince I mention'd, full of high renown,
In this array drew near th' Athenian town;
When in his pomp and utmoſt of his pride,
Marching, he chanc'd to caſt his eye aſide,
And ſaw a choir of mourning dames, who lay
By two and two acroſs the common way.

At

At his approach they rais'd a rueful cry,
And beat their breaſts, and held their hands on high;
Creeping and crying, till they ſeiz'd at laſt
His courſer's bridle, and his feet embrac'd.
" Tell me, ſaid Theſeus, what and whence you are,
" And why this fun'ral pageant you prepare?
" Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
" To meet my triumph in ill-omen'd weeds?
" Or envy you my praiſe, and would deſtroy
" With grief my pleaſures, and pollute my joy?
" Or are you injur'd, and demand relief?
" Name your requeſt, and I will eaſe your grief."
The moſt in years of all the mourning train
Began (but ſwooned firſt away for pain);
Then, ſcarce recover'd, ſpoke: 'Nor envy we
'Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O King, th' afflicted to redreſs,
'And fame has fill'd the world with thy ſucceſs:
'We wretched women ſue for that alone,
'Which of thy goodneſs is refus'd to none:
'Let fall ſome drops of pity on our grief,
'If what we beg be juſt, and we deſerve relief:
'For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
'But held the rank of ſovereign queen before;

'Till,

'Till, thanks to giddy chance, which never bears,
'That mortal bliſs ſhould laſt for length of years,
'She caſt us headlong from our high eſtate,
'And here in hope of thy return we wait;
'And long have waited in the temple nigh,
'Built to the gracious goddeſs Clemency.
'But rev'rence thou the pow'r whoſe name it bears,
'Relieve th' oppreſs'd, and wipe the widow's tears.
'I, wretched I, have other fortune ſeen,
'The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen:
'At Thebes he fell; curſt be the fatal day!
'And all the reſt thou ſeeſt in this array,
'To make their moan, their lords in battle loſt
'Before that town, beſieg'd by our confed'rate hoſt:
'But Creon, old and impious, who commands
'The Theban city, and uſurps the lands,
'Denies the rites of fun'ral fires to thoſe
'Whoſe breathleſs bodies yet he calls his foes.
'Unburn'd, unbury'd, on a heap they lie;
'Such is their fate, and ſuch his tyranny:
'No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
'But with their lifeleſs limbs his hounds are fed.'
At this ſhe ſhriek'd aloud; the mournful train
Echo'd her grief, and grov'ling on the plain,

With

With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Beſought his pity to their helpleſs kind.
The prince was touch'd, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He ſigh'd; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, ſo fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty ſteed he flew,
And raiſing one by one the ſuppliant crew,
To comfort each, full ſolemnly he ſwore,
That, by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And what e'er elſe to chivalry belongs,
He would not ceaſe, till he reveng'd their wrongs:
That Greece ſhould ſee perform'd what he declar'd;
And cruel Creon find his juſt reward.
He ſaid no more, but, ſhunning all delay,
Rode on; nor enter'd Athens on his way:
But left his ſiſter and his queen behind,
And wav'd his royal banner in the wind:
Where in an argent field the god of war
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car;
Red was his ſword and ſhield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead ſeem'd to glow with fire;
Ev'n the ground glitter'd where the ſtandard flew,
And the green graſs was dy'd to ſanguine hue.

High

High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquer'd Minotaur:
The ſoldiers ſhout around with gen'rous rage,
And in that victory their own preſage.
He prais'd their ardour; inly pleas'd to ſee
His hoſt the flow'r of Grecian chivalry.
All day he march'd; and all th' enſuing night;
And ſaw the city with returning light.
The proceſs of the war I need not tell,
How Theſeus conquer'd, and how Creon fell:
Or after, how by ſtorm the walls were won,
Or how the victor ſack'd and burn'd the town:
How to the ladies he reſtor'd again
The bodies of their lords in battle ſlain;
And with what ancient rites they were interr'd:
All theſe to fitter time ſhall be deferr'd.
I ſpare the widows' tears, their woful cries,
And howling at their huſbands' obſequies;
How Theſeus at theſe fun'rals did aſſiſt,
And with what gifts the mourning dames diſmiſs'd.
Thus when the victor chief had Creon ſlain,
And conquer'd Thebes, he pitch'd upon the plain
His mighty camp, and when the day return'd,
The country waſted, and the hamlets burn'd;

And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without controul to ſtrip and ſpoil the dead.
There, in a heap of ſlain, among the reſt,
Two youthful knights they found, beneath a load oppreſs'd
Of ſlaughter'd foes, whom firſt to death they ſent,
The trophies of their ſtrength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they ſeem'd,
Whom kinſmen to the crown the heralds deem'd:
That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
Their ſwords, their ſhields, their ſurcoats were the ſame.
Cloſe by each other laid, they preſs'd the ground,
Their manly boſoms pierc'd with many a grieſly wound;
Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,
But ſome faint ſigns of feeble life appear:
The wand'ring breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulſe, and hardly heav'd the heart.
Theſe two were ſiſter's ſons; and Arcite one,
Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From theſe their coſtly arms the ſpoilers rent,
And ſoftly both convey'd to Theſeus' tent;
Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care,
He to his city ſent as pris'ners of the war,
Hopeleſs of ranſom, and condemn'd to lie
In durance, doom'd a ling'ring death to die.

This

This done, he march'd away with warlike ſound,
And to his Athens turn'd, with laurels crown'd,
Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more renown'd.
But in a tow'r, and never to be loos'd,
The woful captive kinſmen are inclos'd.
Thus year by year they paſs, and day by day,
Till once ('twas on the morn of cheerful May)
The young Emilia, fairer to be ſeen
Than the fair lily on the flow'ry green,
More freſh than May herſelf in bloſſoms new,
(For with the roſy colour ſtrove her hue)
Wak'd, as her cuſtom was, before the day,
To do th' obſervance due to ſprightly May:
For ſprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their ſluggard ſleep.
Each gentle breaſt with kindly warmth ſhe moves;
Inſpires new flames, revives extinguiſh'd loves.
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Aroſe, and dreſs'd herſelf in rich array,
Freſh as the month, and as the morning fair:
Adown her ſhoulders fell her length of hair:
A ribband did the braided treſſes bind,
The reſt was looſe, and wanton'd in the wind.

Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,
And purpled o'er the ſky with bluſhing light,
When to the garden-walk ſhe took her way,
To ſport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.
At ev'ry turn ſhe made a little ſtand,
And thruſt among the thorns her lily hand,
To draw the roſe; and ev'ry roſe ſhe drew,
She ſhook the ſtalk, and bruſh'd away the dew:
Then party-colour'd flow'rs of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, ſhe ſung and caroll'd out ſo clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear.
Ev'n wond'ring Philomel forgot to ſing,
And learn'd from her to welcome in the ſpring.
The tow'r, of which before was mention made,
Within whoſe keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and ſtrong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall:
The garden was inclos'd within the ſquare,
Where young Emilia took the morning air.
It happen'd Palamon, the pris'ner knight,
Reſtleſs for woe, aroſe before the light,
And with his gaoler's leave deſir'd to breathe
An air more wholeſome than the damps beneath.

This

This granted, to the tow'r he took his way,
Cheer'd with the promiſe of a glorious day;
Then caſt a languiſhing regard around,
And ſaw with hateful eyes the temples crown'd
With golden ſpires, and all the hoſtile ground.
He ſigh'd, and turn'd his eyes, becauſe he knew,
'Twas but a larger gaol he had in view:
Then look'd below, and from the caſtle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleaſing ſight:
The garden which before he had not ſeen,
In ſpring's new livery clad of white and green,
Freſh flow'rs in wide parterres, and ſhady walks between.
This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with arms acroſs
He ſtood, reflecting on his country's loſs;
Himſelf an object of the public ſcorn,
And often wiſh'd he never had been born.
At laſt (for ſo his deſtiny requir'd),
With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,
He through a little window caſt his ſight,
Though thick of bars, that gave a ſcanty light;
But ev'n that glimm'ring ſerv'd him to deſcry
Th' inevitable charms of Emily.
Scarce had he ſeen, but, ſeiz'd with ſudden ſmart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;

Struck blind with overpow'ring light he ſtood,
Then ſtarted back amaz'd, and cry'd aloud.
Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haſte,
To help his friend, and in his arms embrac'd;
And aſk'd him why he look'd ſo deadly wan,
And whence and how his change of cheer began?
Or who had done th' offence? "But if, ſaid he,
"Your grief alone is hard captivity,
"For love of Heav'n, with patience undergo
"A cureleſs ill, ſince fate will have it ſo:
"So ſtood our horoſcope in chains to lie,
"And Saturn in the dungeon of the ſky,
"Or other baleful aſpect, rul'd our birth,
"When all the friendly ſtars were under earth:
"Whate'er betides, by deſtiny 'tis done;
"And better bear like men, than vainly ſeek to ſhun."
'Nor of my bonds, ſaid Palamon again,
'Nor of unhappy planets I complain:
'But when my mortal anguiſh caus'd my cry,
'That moment I was hurt through either eye;
'Pierc'd with a random-ſhaft, I faint away,
'And periſh with inſenſible decay:
'A glance of ſome new goddeſs gave the wound,
'Whom, like Actæon, unaware I found.

'Look

'Look how ſhe walks along yon ſhady ſpace;
'Not Juno moves with more majeſtic grace;
'And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
'If thou art Venus, (for thy charms confeſs
'That face was form'd in heav'n) nor art thou leſs,
'Diſguis'd in habit, undiſguis'd in ſhape;
'O help us captives from our chains to 'ſcape!
'But if our doom be paſt in bonds to lie
'For life, and in a loathſome dungeon die,
'Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our diſgrace,
'And ſhow compaſſion to the Theban race,
'Oppreſs'd by tyrant pow'r!' While yet he ſpoke,
Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look;
The fatal dart a ready paſſage found,
And deep within his heart infix'd the wound:
So that, if Palamon were wounded ſore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:
Then from his inmoſt ſoul he ſigh'd, and ſaid,
"The beauty I beheld has ſtruck me dead:
"Unknowingly ſhe ſtrikes, and kills by chance;
"Poiſon is in her eyes, and death in ev'ry glance.
"O, I muſt aſk; nor aſk alone, but move
"Her mind to mercy, or muſt die for love."
Thus Arcite: and thus Palamon replies,
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)

'Speak'ſt thou in earneſt, or in jeſting vein?'
"Jeſting, ſaid Arcite, ſuits but ill with pain."
'It ſuits far worſe (ſaid Palamon again,
'And bent his brows) with men who honour weigh,
'Their faith to break, their friendſhip to betray;
'But worſt with thee, of noble lineage born,
'My kinſman, and in arms my brother ſworn.
'Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
'That one ſhould be the common good of both?
'One ſoul ſhould both inſpire, and neither prove
'His fellow's hindrance in purſuit of love?
'To this before the gods we gave our hands,
'And nothing but our death can break the bands.
'This binds thee, then, to further my deſign;
'As I am bound by vow to further thine:
'Nor canſt, nor dar'ſt thou, traitor, on the plain
'Appeach my honour, or thine own maintain,
'Since thou art of my council, and the friend
'Whoſe faith I truſt, and on whoſe care depend:
'And wouldſt thou court my lady's love, which I
'Much rather than releaſe, would chooſe to die?
'But thou, falſe Arcite, never ſhalt obtain
'Thy bad pretence; I told thee firſt my pain:
'For firſt my love began ere thine was born;
'Thou as my council, and my brother ſworn,

'Art

'Art bound t' aſſiſt my elderſhip of right,
'Or juſtly to be deem'd a perjur'd Knight.'
Thus Palamon: But Arcite with diſdain
In haughty language thus reply'd again:
"Forſworn thyſelf: the traitor's odious name
"I firſt return, and then diſprove thy claim.
"If love be paſſion, and that paſſion nurſt
"With ſtrong deſires, I lov'd the lady firſt.
"Canſt thou pretend deſire, whom zeal inflam'd
"To worſhip, and a pow'r celeſtial nam'd?
"Thine was devotion to the bleſt above;
"I ſaw the woman, and deſir'd her love;
"Firſt own'd my paſſion, and to thee commend
"Th' important ſecret, as my choſen friend.
"Suppoſe (which yet I grant not) thy deſire
"A moment elder than my rival fire;
"Can chance of ſeeing firſt thy title prove?
"And know'ſt thou not, no law is made for love?
"Law is to things which to free choice relate;
"Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
"Laws are but poſitive: love's pow'r, we ſee,
"Is nature's ſanction, and her firſt decree.
"Each day we break the bond of human laws
"For love, and vindicate the common cauſe.

"Laws

" Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd;
" Love throws the fences down, and makes a gen'ral
waſte;
" Maids, widows, wives, without diſtinction fall;
" The ſweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.
" If then the laws of friendſhip I trangreſs,
" I keep the greater, while I break the leſs;
" And both are mad alike, ſince neither can poſſeſs;
" Both hopeleſs to be ranſom'd, never more
" To ſee the ſun, but as he paſſes o'er.
" Like Æſop's hounds contending for the bone,
" Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone:
" The fruitleſs fight continu'd all the day;
" A cur came by, and ſnatch'd the prize away.
" As courtiers therefore juſtle for a grant,
" And, when they break their friendſhip, plead their want;
" So thou, if fortune will thy ſuit advance,
" Love on; nor envy me my equal chance:
" For I muſt love, and am reſolv'd to try
" My fate, or failing in th' adventure die."

Great was their ſtrife, which hourly was renew'd,
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met, they made a ſurly ſtand;

And glar'd like angry lions as they paſs'd,
And wiſh'd that ev'ry look might be their laſt.
It chanc'd at length Pirithous came, t' attend
This worthy Theſeus, his familiar friend:
Their love in early infancy began,
And roſe as childhood ripen'd into man;
Companions of the war; and lov'd ſo well,
That when one dy'd, as ancient ſtories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.
But to purſue my tale: to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long ſince,
And honour'd by this young Theſſalian prince.
Theſeus, to gratify his friend and gueſt,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his requeſt,
Reſtor'd to liberty the captive Knight,
But on theſe hard conditions I recite:
That if hereafter Arcite ſhould be found
Within the compaſs of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head ſhould pay the forfeit of th' offence.
To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promiſe was the pris'ner freed.
Unpleas'd and penſive, hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life muſt pay.

Who

Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchaſe, and repents too late?
" What have I gain'd, he ſaid, in priſon pent,
" If I but change my bonds for baniſhment?
" And baniſh'd from her ſight, I ſuffer more
" In freedom, than I felt in bónds before:
" Forc'd from her preſence, and condemn'd to live:
" Unwelcome freedom, and unthank'd reprieve!
" Heav'n is not, but where Emily abides;
" And where ſhe's abſent, all is hell beſides.
" Next to my day of birth, was that accurſt
" Which bound my friendſhip to Pirithous firſt:
" Had I not known that prince, I ſtill had been
" In bondage, and had ſtill Emilia ſeen:
" For though I never can her grace deſerve,
" 'Tis recompence enough to ſee and ſerve.
" O Palamon, my kinſman and my friend,
" How much more happy fates thy love attend!
" Thine is th' adventure, thine the victory:
" Well has thy fortune turn'd the dice for thee:
" Thou on that angel's face may'ſt feed thy eyes;
" In priſon? no; but bliſsful Paradiſe!
" Thou daily ſeeſt that ſun of beauty ſhine,
" And lov'ſt at leaſt in love's extremeſt line.

" I mourn

" I mourn in abſence love's eternal night:
" And who can tell, but ſince thou haſt her ſight,
" And art a comely, young and valiant Knight,
" Fortune (a various pow'r) may ceaſe to frown,
" And by ſome ways unknown thy wiſhes crown?
" But I, the moſt forlorn of human kind,
" Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
" But doom'd to drag my loathſome life in care,
" For my reward, muſt end it in deſpair.
" Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates
" That governs all, and heav'n that all creates,
" Nor art, nor nature's hand, can eaſe my grief;
" Nothing but death, the wretch's laſt relief:
" Then farewel youth, and all the joys that dwell
" With youth and life, and life itſelf farewel.
" But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
" Of fortune, fate, or providence complain?
" God gives us what he knows our wants require,
" And better things than thoſe which we deſire:
" Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
" But, watch'd by robbers, for their wealth are ſlain.
" Some pray from priſon to be freed; and come,
" When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
" Murder'd by thoſe they truſted with their life,
" A favour'd ſervant, or a boſom wife.

" Such

" Such dear-bought bleſſings happen ev'ry day,
" Becauſe we know not for what things to pray.
" Like drunken ſots, about the ſtreet we roam:
" Well knows the ſot he has a certain home;
" Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,
" And blunders on, and ſtaggers ev'ry pace.
" Thus all ſeek happineſs; but few can find:
" For far the greater part of men are blind.
" This is my caſe, who thought our utmoſt good
" Was in one word of freedom underſtood:
" The fatal bleſſing came: from priſon free,
" I ſtarve abroad, and loſe the ſight of Emily."

Thus Arcite; but if Arcite thus deplore
His ſuff'rings, Palamon yet ſuffers more:
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He ſwells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan:
He frets, he fumes, he ſtares, he ſtamps the ground;
The hollow tow'r with clamours rings around:
With briny tears he bath'd his fetter'd feet,
And dropp'd all o'er with agony of ſweat.
'Alas! he cried, I wretch in priſon pine,
'Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
'Thou liv'ſt at large, thou draw'ſt thy native air,
'Pleas'd with thy freedom, proud of my deſpair:

'Thou

'Thou may'ſt, ſince thou haſt youth and courage join'd,
'A ſweet behaviour and a ſolid mind,
'Aſſemble ours, and all the Theban race,
'To vindicate on Athens thy diſgrace:
'And after (by ſome treaty made) poſſeſs
'Fair Emily, the pledge of laſting peace:
'So thine ſhall be the beauteous prize, while I
'Muſt languiſh in deſpair, in priſon die.
'Thus all th' advantage of the ſtrife is thine;
'Thy portion double joys, and double ſorrows mine.'
The rage of jealouſy then fir'd his ſoul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold deſpair, ſucceeding in her ſtead,
To livid paleneſs turns the glowing red.
His blood, ſcarce liquid, creeps within his veins,
Like water which the freezing wind conſtrains.
Then thus he ſaid: 'Eternal deities,
'Who rule the world with abſolute decrees,
'And write whatever time ſhall bring to paſs,
'With pens of adamant on plates of braſs;
'What, is the race of human kind your care
'Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
'He with the reſt is liable to pain,
'And like the ſheep, his brother-beaſt, is ſlain.

'Cold,

'Cold, hunger, priſons, ills without a cure,
'All theſe he muſt, and guiltleſs oft, endure:
'Or does your juſtice, pow'r, or preſcience fail,
'When the good ſuffer, and the bad prevail?
'What worſe to wretched virtue could befal,
'If fate, or giddy fortune govern'd all?
'Nay, worſe than other beaſts is our eſtate;
'Them to purſue their pleaſures you create;
'We, bound by harder laws, muſt curb our will,
'And your commands, not our deſires, fulfil;
'Then, when the creature is unjuſtly ſlain,
'Yet, after death at leaſt, he feels no pain;
'But man, in life ſurcharg'd with woe before,
'Not freed when dead, is doom'd to ſuffer more.
'A ſerpent ſhoots his ſting at unaware;
'An ambuſh'd thief forelays a traveller;
'The man lies murder'd, while the thief and ſnake,
'One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
'This let divines decide; but well I know,
'Juſt, or unjuſt, I have my ſhare of woe,
'Through Saturn ſeated in a luckleſs place,
'And Juno's wrath, that perſecutes my race;
'Or Mars and Venus in a quartil, move
'My pangs of jealouſy for Arcite's love.'

Let

Let Palamon oppreſs'd in bondage mourn,
While to his exil'd rival we return.
By this, the ſun declining from his height
The day had ſhorten'd to prolong the night:
The lengthen'd night gave length of miſery
Both to the captive lover and the free:
For Palamon in endleſs priſon mourns;
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns.
The baniſh'd never hopes his love to ſee;
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty.
'Tis hard to ſay who ſuffers greater pains:
One ſees his love, but cannot break his chains;
One freed, and all his actions uncontroll'd,
Beholds whate'er he would, but what he would behold.
Judge as you pleaſe, for I will haſte to tell
What fortune to the baniſh'd Knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,
The loſs of her he lov'd renew'd his pain;
What could be worſe, than never more to ſee
His life, his ſoul, his charming Emily?
He rav'd with all the madneſs of deſpair;
He roar'd, he beat his breaſt, he tore his hair.
Dry ſorrow in his ſtupid eyes appears;
For wanting nouriſhment, he wanted tears:

His eye-balls in their hollow ſockets ſink;
Bereft of ſleep, he loaths his meat and drink:
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale ſpectre of a murder'd man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of ſapleſs boxen leaves:
In ſolitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone.
Nor mix'd in mirth, in youthful pleaſure ſhares;
But ſighs when ſongs and inſtruments he hears:
His ſpirits are ſo low, his voice is drown'd;
He hears as from afar, or in a ſwoon,
Like the deaf murmurs of a diſtant ſound:
Uncomb'd his locks, and ſqualid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay deſire;
But full of muſeful mopings, which preſage
The loſs of reaſon, and conclude in rage.
This when he had endur'd a year and more,
Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,
It happen'd once, that ſlumb'ring as he lay,
He dreamt (his dream began at break of day)
That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd,
And with ſoft words his drooping ſpirits cheer'd:
His hat adorn'd with wings diſclos'd the god,
And in his hand he bore the ſleep-compelling rod:

Such

Such as he ſeem'd, when at his ſire's command
On Argus' head he laid the ſnaky wand:
" Ariſe, he ſaid, to conqu'ring Athens go,
" There fate appoints an end to all thy woe."
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a ſtart,
Againſt his boſom bounc'd his heaving heart;
But ſoon he ſaid, with ſcarce-recover'd breath,
" And thither will I go, to meet my death,
" Sure to be ſlain; but death is my deſire,
" Since in Emilia's ſight I ſhall expire."
By chance he ſpy'd a mirror while he ſpoke,
And gazing there, beheld his alter'd look;
Wond'ring, he ſaw his features and his hue
So much were chang'd, that ſcarce himſelf he knew.
A ſudden thought then ſtarting in his mind,
" Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
" The world may ſearch in vain with all their eyes,
" But never penetrate through this diſguiſe.
" Thanks to the change which grief and ſickneſs give;
" In low eſtate I may ſecurely live,
" And ſee unknown my miſtreſs day by day:"
He ſaid; and cloth'd himſelf in coarſe array;
A lab'ring hind in ſhew: then forth he went,
And to th' Athenian tow'rs his journey bent:

One ſquire attended in the ſame diſguiſe,
Made conſcious of his maſter's enterprize.
Arriv'd at Athens, ſoon he came to court,
Unknown, unqueſtion'd in that thick reſort;
Proff'ring for hire his ſervice at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So far befel him, that for little gain
He ſerv'd at firſt Emilia's chamberlain;
And watchful all advantages to ſpy,
Was ſtill at hand, and in his maſter's eye;
And, as his bones were big, and ſinews ſtrong,
Refus'd no toil that could to ſlaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.
He paſs'd a year at leaſt attending thus
On Emily, and call'd Philoſtratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much eſteem'd, ſo well belov'd as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courteſy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace;
That exercis'd within a higher ſphere,
His virtues more conſpicuous might appear.

Thus

Thus by the gen'ral voice was Arcite prais'd,
And by great Theſeus to high favour rais'd;
Among his menial ſervants firſt enroll'd,
And largely entertain'd with ſums of gold:
Beſides what ſecretly from Thebes was ſent,
Of his own income, and his annual rent.
This well employ'd, he purchas'd friends and fame;
But cautiouſly conceal'd from whence it came.
Thus for three years he liv'd with large increaſe,
In arms of honour, and eſteem in peace:
To Theſeus' perſon he was ever near;
And Theſeus for his virtues held him dear.

While Arcite lives in bliſs, the ſtory turns
Where hopeleſs Palamon in priſon mourns.
For ſix long years immur'd, the captive Knight
Had dragg'd his chains, and ſcarcely ſeen the light:
Loſt liberty and love at once he bore;
His priſon pain'd him much, his paſſion more;
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wiſhes to be free from love.

But when the ſixth revolving year was run,
And May within the twins receiv'd the ſun,
Were it by chance, or forceful deſtiny,
Which forms in cauſes firſt whate'er ſhall be,

Aſſiſted by a friend one moonleſs night,
This Palamon from priſon took his flight:
A pleaſant beverage he prepar'd before
Of wine and honey mix'd, with added ſtore
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who ſwallow'd unaware the ſleepy draught,
And ſnor'd ſecure till morn; his ſenſes bound
In ſlumber, and in long oblivion drown'd.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert ere the riſing ſun.
A thick-ſpread foreſt near the city lay;
To this with lengthen'd ſtrides he took his way,
(For far he could not fly, and fear'd the day.)
Safe from purſuit, he meant to ſhun the light,
Till the brown ſhadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next deſign
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theſeus, till he loſt his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.

Thus while his thoughts the ling'ring day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our ſtile;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treach'rous fortune caught him in the ſnare.

The

The morning-lark, the meſſenger of day,
Saluted in her ſong the morning grey;
And ſoon the ſun aroſe with beams ſo bright,
That all th' horizon laugh'd to ſee the joyous ſight:
He with his tepid rays the roſe renews,
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, reſolv'd to pay
Obſervance to the month of merry May:
Forth on his fiery ſteed betimes he rode,
That ſcarcely prints the turf on which he trod:
At eaſe he ſeem'd, and prancing o'er the plains,
Turn'd only to the grove his horſe's reins,
The grove I nam'd before; and lighting there,
A woodbine garland ſought to crown his hair;
Then turn'd his face againſt the riſing day,
And rais'd his voice to welcome in the May.
" For thee, ſweet month, the groves green liv'ries wear;
" If not the firſt, the faireſt of the year:
" For thee the Graces lead the dancing Hours,
" And Nature's ready pencil paints the flow'rs:
" When thy ſhort reign is paſt, the fev'riſh ſun
" The ſultry tropic fears, and moves more ſlowly on.
" So may thy tender bloſſoms fear no blight,
" Nor goats with venom'd teeth thy tendrils bite,

" As thou ſhalt guide my wand'ring feet to find
" The fragrant greens I ſeek, my brows to bind."
His vows addreſs'd, within the grove he ſtray'd,
Till fate, or fortune, near the place convey'd
His ſteps, where ſecret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle Knight,
Who flying death had there conceal'd his flight,
In brakes and brambles hid, and ſhunning mortal fight.
And leſs he knew him for his hated foe;
But fear'd him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been ſaid of ancient years,
That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears:
For this the wiſe are ever on their guard,
For unforeſeen, they ſay, is unprepar'd.
Uncautious Arcite thought himſelf alone,
And leſs than all ſuſpected Palamon,
Who liſt'ning heard him, while he ſearch'd the grove,
And loudly ſung his roundelay of love.
But on the ſudden ſtopp'd, and ſilent ſtood,
(As lovers often muſe, and change their mood)
Now high as heav'n, and then as low as hell;
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well:
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And ſeldom ſhall we ſee a Friday clear.

Thus

Thus Arcite having ſung, with alter'd hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his boſom drew
A deſp'rate ſigh, accuſing heav'n and fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.
" Curs'd be the day when firſt I did appear!
" Let it be blotted from the calendar,
" Leſt it pollute the month, and poiſon all the year.
" Still will the jealous queen purſue our race?
" Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:
" Yet ceaſes not her hate: for all who come
" From Cadmus, are involv'd in Cadmus' doom.
" I ſuffer for my blood: unjuſt decree!
" That puniſhes another's crime on me.
" In mean eſtate I ſerve my mortal foe,
" The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.
" This is not all; for Juno, to my ſhame,
" Has forc'd me to forſake my former name;
" Arcite I was, Philoſtratus I am.
" That ſide of heaven is all my enemy:
" Mars ruin'd Thebes; his mother ruin'd me.
" Of all the royal race remains but one
" Beſide myſelf, th' unhappy Palamon,
" Whom Theſeus holds in bonds, and will not free;
" Without a crime, except his kin to me.

" Yet

" Yet theſe, and all the reſt I could endure:
" But love's a malady without a cure:
" Fierce Love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart;
" He fries within, and hiſſes at my heart.
" Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate purſue;
" I ſuffer for the reſt, I die for you.
" Of ſuch a goddeſs no time leaves record,
" Who burn'd the temple where ſhe was ador'd:
" And let it burn, I never will complain,
" Pleas'd with my ſuff'rings, if you knew my pain."
At this a ſickly qualm his heart aſſail'd,
His ears ring inward, and his ſenſes fail'd.
No word miſs'd Palamon of all he ſpoke,
But ſoon to deadly pale he chang'd his look:
He trembled ev'ry limb, and felt a ſmart,
As if cold ſteel had glided through his heart;
Nor longer ſtaid, but ſtarting from his place,
Diſcover'd ſtood, and ſhow'd his hoſtile face:
' Falſe traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
' Bound by thy ſacred oath to ſeek my good;
' Now art thou found forſworn, for Emily;
' And dar'ſt attempt her love, for whom I die.
' So haſt thou cheated Theſeus with a wile,
' Againſt thy vow, returning to beguile

' Under

'Under a borrow'd name: as falſe to me,
'So falſe thou art to him that ſet thee free.
'But reſt aſſur'd, that either thou ſhalt die,
'Or elſe renounce thy claim in Emily.
'For though unarm'd I am, and (freed by chance)
'Am here without my ſword, or pointed lance;
'Hope not, baſe man, unqueſtion'd hence to go,
'For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe.'

Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,
His ſword unſheath'd, and fiercely thus began:
"Now by the gods, who govern heav'n above,
"Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
"That word had been thy laſt, or in this grove
"This hand ſhould force thee to renounce thy love.
"The ſurety which I gave thee, I defy:
"Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
"And Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury.
"Know, I will ſerve the fair in thy deſpite;
"But ſince thou art my kinſman, and a Knight,
"Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
"Our arms ſhall plead the titles of our love:
"And heav'n ſo help my right, as I alone
"Will come, and keep the cauſe and quarrel both unknown,

"With

" With arms of proof both for myſelf and thee;
" Chooſe thou the beſt, and leave the worſt to me.
" And, that a better eaſe thou may'ſt abide,
" Bedding and clothes I will this night provide,
" And needful ſuſtenance, that thou may'ſt be
" A conqueſt better won, and worthy me."
His promiſe Palamon accepts; but pray'd,
To keep it better than the firſt he made.

Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn,
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.
Oh Love! thou ſternly doſt thy pow'r maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign,
Tyrants and thou all fellowſhip diſdain.
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon;
Both in deſpair, yet each would love alone.

Arcite return'd, and, as in honour ty'd,
His foe with bedding and with food ſupply'd;
Then, ere the day, two ſuits of armour ſought,
Which borne before him on his ſteed he brought:
Both were of ſhining ſteel, and wrought ſo pure,
As might the ſtrokes of two ſuch arms endure.
Now, at the time, and in th' appointed place,
The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,
Approach; each other from afar they knew,
And from afar their hatred chang'd their hue.

So

So ſtands the Thracian herdſman with his ſpear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
And hears him ruſtling in the wood, and ſees
His courſe at diſtance by the bending trees,
And thinks, Here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he muſt fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A gen'rous chilneſs ſeizes every part;
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.
Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
None greets; for none the greeting will return:
But in dumb ſurlineſs, each arm'd with care,
His foe profeſt, as brother of the war:
Then both, no moment loſt, at once advance
Againſt each other, arm'd with ſword and lance:
They laſh, they foin, they paſs, they ſtrive to bore
Their corſlets, and the thinneſt parts explore.
Thus two long hours in equal arms they ſtood,
And wounded, wound; till both were bath'd in blood;
And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the ſpot.
Fell Arcite like an angry tiger far'd,
And like a lion Palamon appear'd:
Or as two boars whom love to battle draws,
With riſing briſtles, and with frothy jaws,

Their

Their adverſe breaſts with tuſks oblique they wound;
With grunts and groans the foreſt rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting muſt abide,
Till fate an umpire ſends their diff'rence to decide.
The pow'r that miniſters to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heav'n foreſees,
Call'd providence, or chance, or fatal ſway,
Comes with reſiſtleſs force, and finds or makes her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united pow'r,
One moment can retard th' appointed hour.
And ſome one day, ſome wondrous chance appears,
Which happen'd not in centuries of years:
For ſure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on pow'rs above:
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foreſight neceſſitate the will.
In Theſeus this appears; whoſe youthful joy
Was beaſts of chaſe in foreſts to deſtroy:
This gentle Knight, inſpir'd by jolly May,
Forſook his eaſy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds purſu'd his way.
Beſide him rode Hippolyta the queen,
And Emily, attir'd in lively green;
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh;

And

And as he follow'd Mars before, ſo now
He ſerves the goddeſs of the ſilver bow.
The way that Theſeus took was to the wood,
Where the two Knights in cruel battle ſtood;
The lawn on which they fought, th' appointed place,
In which th' uncoupled hounds began the chaſe.
Thither forth-right he rode to rouſe the prey,
That ſhaded by the fern in harbour lay;
And thence diſlodg'd, was wont to leave the wood,
For open fields, and croſs the cryſtal flood.
Approach'd, and looking underneath the ſun,
He ſaw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow;
Like lightning flam'd their fauchions to and fro,
And ſhot a dreadful gleam; ſo ſtrong they ſtruck,
There ſeem'd leſs force requir'd to fell an oak.
He gaz'd with wonder on their equal might,
Look'd eager on, but knew not either Knight:
Reſolv'd to learn, he ſpurr'd his fiery ſteed
With goring rowels, to provoke his ſpeed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So ſoon he was betwixt 'em on the place:
And with his ſword unſheath'd, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to ceaſe their ſtrife;

Then

Then with imperious tone purſues his threat:
" What are you? Why in arms together met?
" How dares your pride preſume againſt my laws,
" As in a liſted field to fight your cauſe?
" Unaſk'd the royal grant; no marſhal by,
" As knightly rites require; nor judge to try?"
Then Palamon, with ſcarce recover'd breath,
Thus haſty ſpoke: 'We both deſerve the death,
'And both would die; for look the world around,
'A pair ſo wretched is not to be found.
'Our life's a load; encumber'd with the charge,
'We long to ſet th' impriſon'd ſoul at large.
'Now as thou art a ſov'reign judge, decree
'The rightful doom of death to him and me,
'Let neither find thy grace; for grace is cruelty.
'Me firſt, O kill me firſt; and cure my woe;
'Then ſheath the ſword of juſtice on my foe:
'Or kill him firſt; for when his name is heard,
'He foremoſt will receive his due reward.
'Arcite of Thebes is he; thy mortal foe,
'On whom thy grace did liberty beſtow;
'But firſt contracted, that if ever found
'By day or night upon th' Athenian ground,
'His head ſhould pay the forfeit: ſee return'd
'The perjur'd Knight, his oath and honour ſcorn'd:
'For

'For this is he, who with a borrow'd name
'And proffer'd ſervice to thy palace came,
'Now call'd Philoſtratus: retain'd by thee,
'A traitor truſted, and in high degree,
'Aſpiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.
'My part remains: from Thebes my birth I own,
'And call myſelf th' unhappy Palamon.
'Think me not like that man; ſince no diſgrace
'Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
'Know me for what I am: I broke thy chain,
'Nor promis'd I thy pris'ner to remain:
'The love of liberty with life is giv'n,
'And life itſelf th' inferior gift of heav'n.
'Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
'I with this Arcite am thy mortal foe:
'Then give me death, ſince I thy life purſue;
'For ſafeguard of thyſelf, death is my due.
'More wouldſt thou know? I love bright Emily,
'And for her ſake and in her ſight will die:
'But kill my rival too; for he no leſs
'Deſerves; and I thy righteous doom will bleſs,
'Aſſur'd that what I loſe, he never ſhall poſſeſs.'

To this reply'd the ſtern Athenian prince,
And ſourly ſmil'd: "In owning your offence

" You judge yourſelf; and I but keep record
" In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
" Take your deſert, the death you have decreed;
" I ſeal your doom, and ratify the deed.
" By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die."
He ſaid; dumb ſorrow ſeiz'd the ſtanders-by.
The queen, above the reſt, by nature good,
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)
For tender pity wept: when ſhe began,
Through the bright quire th' infectious virtue ran.
All dropp'd their tears, ev'n the contended maid;
And thus among themſelves they ſoftly ſaid:
' What eyes can ſuffer this unworthy ſight!
' Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,
' The maſterſhip of heav'n in face and mind,
' And lovers, far beyond their faithleſs kind:
' See their wide ſtreaming wounds; they neither came
' For pride of empire, nor deſire of fame:
' Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applauſe;
' But love for love alone; that crowns the lover's cauſe.'
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in ev'ry lady's mind,
They left their ſteeds, and, proſtrate on the place,
From the fierce king implor'd th' offenders' grace.

He

He paus'd a while, ſtood ſilent in his mood;
(For yet his rage was boiling in his blood)
But ſoon his tender mind th' impreſſion felt,
(As ſofteſt metals are not ſlow to melt;
And pity ſooneſt runs in gentle minds:)
Then reaſons with himſelf; and firſt he finds
His paſſion caſt a miſt before his ſenſe,
And either made, or magnify'd th' offence.
Offence! of what? to whom? who judg'd the cauſe?
The pris'ner freed himſelf by nature's laws:
Born free, he ſought his right: the man he freed
Was perjur'd, but his love excus'd the deed:
Thus pond'ring, he look'd under with his eyes,
And ſaw the women's tears, and heard their cries;
Which mov'd compaſſion more: he ſhook his head,
And ſoftly ſighing, to himſelf he ſaid:
" Curſe on th' unpard'ning prince, whom tears can
draw
" To no remorſe; who rules by lions' law;
" And deaf to pray'rs, by no ſubmiſſion bow'd,
" Rends all alike, the penitent and proud:"
At this, with look ſerene, he rais'd his head;
Reaſon reſum'd her place, and paſſion fled:
Then thus aloud he ſpoke: " The pow'r of love,
" In earth, and ſeas, and air, and heav'n above,

" Rules unreſiſted with an awful nod;
" By daily miracles declar'd a god:
" He blinds the wiſe, gives eye-ſight to the blind;
" And moulds and ſtamps anew the lover's mind.
" Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
" Freed from my fetters, and in ſafety gone—
" What hinder'd either in their native ſoil,
" At eaſe to reap the harveſt of their toil?
" But Love, their lord, did otherwiſe ordain,
" And brought them in their own deſpite again,
" To ſuffer death deſerv'd for well they know,
" 'Tis in my pow'r, and I their deadly foe:
" The proverb holds, that to be wiſe and love,
" Is hardly granted to the gods above.
" See how the madmen bleed: behold the gains
" With which their maſter, Love, rewards their pains:
" For ſev'n long yea on duty ev'ry day,
" Lo! their obedience, and their monarch's pay.
" Yet, as in duty bound, they ſerve him on;
" And aſk the fools, they think it wiſely done:
" Nor eaſe, nor wealth, nor life itſelf regard,
" For 'tis their maxim, love is love's reward.
" This is not all; the fair for whom they ſtrove,
" Nor knew before, nor could ſuſpect their love,

" Nor

" Nor thought, when ſhe beheld the fight from far,
" Her beauty was th' occaſion of the war.
" But ſure a gen'ral doom on man is paſt,
" And all are fools and lovers, firſt or laſt:
" This both by others and myſelf I know,
" For I have ſerv'd their ſov'reign long ago,
" Oft have been caught within the winding train
" Of female ſnares, and felt the lover's pain,
" And learn'd how far the god can human hearts conſtrain.
" To this remembrance, and the prayers of thoſe
" Who for th' offending warriors interpoſe,
" I give their forfeit lives; on this accord,
" To do me homage as their ſov'reign lord;
" And as my vaſſals, to their utmoſt might,
" Aſſiſt my perſon, and aſſert my right."
This freely ſworn, the Knights their grace obtain'd;
Then thus the King his ſecret thoughts explain'd:
" If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
" Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
" Then either of you Knights may well deſerve
" A princeſs born; and ſuch is ſhe you ſerve:
" For Emily is ſiſter to the crown,
" And but too well to both her beauty known:

" But ſhould you combat till you both were dead,
" Two lovers cannot ſhare a ſingle bed:
" As therefore both are equal in degree,
" The lot of both be left to deſtiny.
" Now hear th' award; and happy may it prove
" To her, and him who beſt deſerves her love.
" Depart from hence in peace, and free as air,
" Search the wide world, and where you pleaſe repair;
" But on the day when this returning ſun
" To the ſame point through ev'ry ſign has run,
" Then each of you his hundred Knights ſhall bring,
" In royal liſts to fight before the king;
" And then the Knight, whom fate or happy chance
" Shall with his friends to victory advance,
" And grace his arms ſo far in equal fight,
" From out the bars to force his oppoſite,
" Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
" The prize of valour and of love ſhall gain;
" The vanquiſh'd party ſhall their claim releaſe,
" And the long jars conclude in laſting peace.
" The charge be mine t' adorn the choſen ground,
" The theatre of war, for champions ſo renown'd;
" And take the patron's place of either Knight,
" With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
" And heav'n of me ſo judge, as I ſhall judge aright.

" If

" If both are ſatisfy'd with this accord,
" Swear by the laws of knighthood on my ſword."
Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And raviſh'd Arcite ſeems to touch the ſky:
The whole aſſembled troop was pleas'd as well,
Extol'd th' award, and on their knees they fell
To bleſs the gracious King. The Knights with leave
Departing from the place, his laſt commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardour look,
And from her eyes their inſpiration took.
From thence to Thebes' old walls purſue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.
It might be deem'd on our hiſtorian's part,
Or too much negligence, or want of art,
If he forgot the vaſt magnificence
Of royal Theſeus, and his large expence.
He firſt inclos'd for liſts a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile around:
The form was circular; and all without
A trench was ſunk, to moat the place about.
Within, an amphitheatre appear'd,
Rais'd in degrees; to ſixty paces rear'd;
That when a man was plac'd in one degree,
Height was allow'd for him above to ſee.

Eaſtward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorn'd the weſtern oppoſite.
A nobler object than this fabrick was,
Rome never ſaw; nor of ſo vaſt a ſpace:
For, rich with ſpoils of many a conquer'd land,
All arts and artiſts Theſeus could command;
Who ſold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
The maſter painters and the carvers came.
So roſe within the compaſs of a year
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eaſtern gate was rais'd above
A temple, ſacred to the queen of love;
An altar ſtood below: on either hand
A prieſt with roſes crown'd, who held a myrtle wand.
The dome of Mars was on the gate oppos'd,
And on the North a turret was inclos'd,
Within the wall, of alabaſter white,
And crimſon coral, for the queen of night,
Who takes in ſylvan ſports her chaſte delight.
Within theſe oratories might you ſee
Rich carvings, portraitures, and imag'ry:
Where ev'ry figure to the life expreſs'd
The godhead's pow'r, to whom it was addreſs'd.
In Venus' temple, on the ſides were ſeen
The broken ſlumbers of enamour'd men:

Pray'rs

Pray'rs that ev'n ſpoke, and pity ſeem'd to call,
And iſſuing ſighs that ſmok'd along the wall:
Complaints, and hot deſires, the lover's hell,
And ſcalding tears, that wore a channel where they fell:
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties
Of love's aſſurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in luſt, conclude in perjuries.
Beauty, and youth, and wealth, and luxury,
And ſprightly hope, and ſhort-enduring joy;
And ſorceries to raiſe th' infernal pow'rs,
And ſigils fram'd in planetary hours:
Expence, and after-thought, and idle care,
And doubts of motly hue, and dark deſpair:
Suſpicions, and fantaſtical ſurmiſe,
And jealouſy ſuffus'd, with jaundice in her eyes;
Diſcolouring all ſhe view'd, in tawny dreſs'd;
Down-look'd, and with a cuckow on her fiſt.
Oppos'd to her, on t' other ſide advance
The coſtly feaſt, the carol, and the dance,
Minſtrels and muſic, poetry and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
All theſe were painted on the wall, and more;
With acts and monuments of times before:

And

And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:
For there th' Idalian mount, and Citheron,
The court of Venus, was in colours drawn:
Before the palace gate, in careleſs dreſs,
And looſe array, ſat portreſs Idleneſs:
There, by the fount, Narciſſus pin'd alone,
There Sampſon was, with wiſer Solomon,
And all the mighty names by love undone.
Medea's charms were there, Circean feaſts,
With bowls that turn'd enamour'd youths to beaſts.
Here might be ſeen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And prowreſs, to the pow'r of love ſubmit:
The ſpreading ſnare for all mankind is laid;
And lovers all betray, and are betray'd.
The goddeſs' ſelf ſome noble hand had wrought;
Smiling ſhe ſeem'd, and full of pleaſing thought:
From ocean as ſhe firſt began to riſe,
And ſmooth'd the ruffled ſeas, and clear'd the ſkies,
She trod the brine all bare below the breaſt,
And the green waves but ill conceal'd the reſt:
A lute ſhe held; and on her head was ſeen
A wreath of roſes red, and myrtles green;
Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above;
And by his mother ſtood an infant Love,

With

With wings unfledg'd; his eyes were banded o'er,
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,
Supply'd with arrows bright and keen, a deadly ſtore.
But in the dome of mighty Mars the red,
With diff'rent figures all the ſides were ſpread:
This temple, leſs in form, with equal grace
Was imitative of the firſt in Thrace:
For that cold region was the lov'd abode
And ſov'reign manſion of the warrior-god.
The landſcape was a foreſt wide and bare,
Where neither beaſt, nor human kind repair;
The fowl, that ſcent afar, the borders fly,
And ſhun the bitter blaſt, and wheel about the ſky.
A cake of ſcurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly ſtubs, inſtead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old,
Headleſs the moſt, and hideous to behold:
A rattling tempeſt through the branches went,
That ſtripp'd 'em bare, and one ſole way they bent.
Heav'n froze above, ſevere, the clouds congeal,
And through the cryſtal vault appear'd the ſtanding hail.
Such was the face without, a mountain ſtood
Threat'ning from high, and overlook'd the wood:
Beneath the low'ring brow, and on a bent,
The temple ſtood of Mars armipotent;

The

The frame of burniſh'd ſteel, that caſt a glare
From far, and ſeem'd to thaw the freezing air.
A ſtrait, long entry, to the temple led,
Blind with high walls; and horror over head:
Thence iſſued ſuch a blaſt and hollow roar,
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door:
In, through that door, a northern light there ſhone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.
The gate was adamant; eternal frame!
Which hew'd by Mars himſelf, from Indian quarries came,
The labour of a God; and all along
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it ſtrong.
A tun about was ev'ry pillar there;
A poliſh'd mirror ſhone not half ſo clear.
There ſaw I how the ſecret felon wrought,
And treaſon lab'ring in the traitor's thought;
And midwife time the ripen'd plot to murder brought.
There, the red anger dar'd the pallid fear:
Next ſtood hypocriſy, with holy leer,
Soft ſmiling, and demurely looking down;
But hid the dagger underneath the gown:
Th' aſſaſſinating wife, the houſhold fiend;
And far the blackeſt there, the traitor-friend.

On

On t' other ſide there ſtood deſtruction bare;
Unpuniſh'd rapine, and a waſte of war.
Conteſt, with ſharpen'd knives, in cloiſters drawn,
And all with blood beſpread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul diſgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language baſe;
Till ſenſe was loſt in ſound, and ſilence fled the place.
The ſlayer of himſelf yet ſaw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair:
With eyes half clos'd, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breath'd his ſullen ſoul away.
In midſt of all the dome misfortune ſat,
And gloomy diſcontent, and fell debate;
And madneſs laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murder'd corpſe, in covert laid,
And violent death in thouſand ſhapes diſplay'd:
The city to the ſoldier's rage reſign'd:
Succeſsleſs wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky ſhores,
And the raſh hunter ſtrangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurſes overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars his nature, flame and ſteel;
The gaſping charioteer, beneath the wheel

Of

Of his own car; the ruin'd houſe that falls,
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole diviſion that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death, that deal in ſteel for gains,
Were there: the butcher, armourer, and ſmith,
Who forges ſharpen'd fauchions, or the ſcythe.
The ſcarlet conqueſt on a tow'r was plac'd,
With ſhouts, and ſoldiers' acclamations grac'd:
A pointed ſword hung threat'ning o'er his head,
Suſtain'd but by a ſlender twine of thread.
There ſaw I Mars his Ides, the Capitol,
The ſeer in vain foretelling Cæſar's fall,
The laſt Triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who loſt the world for love.
Theſe and a thouſand more the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born;
All copy'd from the heav'ns, and ruling force
Of the red ſtar, in his revolving courſe.
The form of Mars high on a chariot ſtood,
All ſheath'd in arms, and gruffly look'd the god:
Two geomantic figures were diſplay'd
Above his head, a * warrior and a maid,
One when direct, and one when retrograde.

* Rubeus and Puella.

Tir'd

Tir'd with deformities of death, I haſte
To the third temple of Diana chaſte;
A ſylvan ſcene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the ſides, and on the midſt a lawn:
The ſilver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Purſu'd the flying deer, the woods with horns reſound:
Caliſtho there ſtood manifeſt of ſhame,
And, turn'd a bear, the northern ſtar became:
Her ſon was next, and by peculiar grace
In the cold circle held the ſecond place:
The ſtag Acteon in the ſtream had ſpy'd
The naked huntreſs, and, for ſeeing, dy'd:
His hounds, unknowing of his change, purſue
The chaſe, and their miſtaken maſter ſlew.
Peneian Daphne too was there to ſee,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree:
Th' adjoining fane th' aſſembled Greeks expreſs'd,
And hunting of the Caledonian beaſt.
Oenides' valour, and his envy'd prize;
The fatal pow'r of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor ſhown,
The murdreſs mother, and conſuming ſon.
The Volſcian queen extended on the plain;
The treaſon puniſh'd, and the traitor ſlain.

The reſt were various huntings, well deſign'd,
And ſavage beaſts deſtroy'd, of every kind.
The graceful goddeſs was array'd in green;
About her feet were little beagles ſeen,
That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their queen.
Her legs were buſkin'd, and the left before,
In act to ſhoot; a ſilver bow ſhe bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that ſoon would wane,
And drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again:
With downcaſt eyes, as ſeeming to ſurvey
The dark dominions, her alternate ſway.
Before her ſtood a woman in her throes,
And call'd Lucina's aid, her burden to diſcloſe.
All theſe the painter drew with ſuch command,
That Nature ſnatch'd the pencil from his hand,
Aſham'd and angry that his art could feign
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theſeus beheld the fanes of ev'ry god,
And thought his mighty coſt was well beſtow'd.
So princes now their poets ſhould regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.
The theatre thus rais'd, the liſts enclos'd,
And all with vaſt magnificence diſpos'd,

We

We leave the Monarch pleas'd, and haſte to bring
The Knights to combat; and their arms to ſing.
The day approach'd, when fortune ſhould decide
Th' important enterprize, and give the bride;
For now, the rivals round the world had ſought,
And each his number, well-appointed, brought.
The nations, far and near, contend in choice,
And ſend the flow'r of war by public voice;
That after, or before, were never known
Such chiefs; as each an army ſeem'd alone:
Beſides the champions, all of high degree,
Who knighthood lov'd and deeds of chivalry,
Throng'd to the liſts, and envy'd to behold
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.
Nor ſeems it ſtrange; for ev'ry noble Knight,
Who loves the fair, and is endu'd with might,
In ſuch a quarrel would be proud to fight.
There breathes not ſcarce a man on Britiſh ground
(An iſle for love and arms of old renown'd)
But would have ſold his life to purchaſe fame,
To Palamon or Arcite ſent his name;
And had the land ſelected of the beſt,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the reſt.
A hundred Knights with Palamon there came,
Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name:

Their arms were ſev'ral, as their nations were,
But furniſh'd all alike with ſword and ſpear.
Some wore coat-armour, imitating ſcale;
And next their ſkins were ſtubborn ſhirts of mail:
Some wore a breaſt-plate and a light juppon,
Their horſes cloth'd with rich capariſon:
Some for defence would leathern bucklers uſe,
Of folded hides; and others ſhields of pruce:
One hung a pole-axe at his ſaddle-bow,
And one a heavy mace, to ſhun the foe:
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With *jambeux* arm'd, and double plates of ſteel:
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a ſleeve embroider'd by his love.
With Palamon, above the reſt in place,
Lycurgus came, the ſurly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face:
The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,
And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red:
He look'd a lion with a gloomy ſtare,
And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair:
Big-bon'd, and large of limbs, with ſinews ſtrong,
Broad-ſhoulder'd, and his arms were round and long:
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian uſe of old)
Were yok'd to draw his car of burniſh'd gold.

Upright

Upright he ſtood, and bore aloft his ſhield,
Conſpicuous from afar, and overlook'd the field.
His ſurcoat was a bear-ſkin on his back;
His hair hung long behind, and gloſſy raven-black.
His ample forehead bore a coronet,
With ſparkling diamonds and with rubies ſet:
Ten brace and more of greyhounds ſnowy fair,
And tall as ſtags, ran looſe, and cours'd around his chair,
A match for pards in flight; in grappling, for the bear.
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the ſame their necks ſurround.
Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred Knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with ſtrong Arcite came
Emetrius king of Inde, a mighty name,
On a bay courſer, goodly to behold,
The trappings of his horſe emboſs'd with barb'rous gold:
Not Mars beſtrode a ſteed with greater grace;
His ſurcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His ſaddle was of gold with em'ralds ſet.
His ſhoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and ſparkling as the fire:

His amber-colour'd locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and ſhone againſt the ſun.
His noſe was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and freſh and fair his hue:
Some ſprinkled freckles on his face were ſeen,
Whoſe duſk ſet off the whiteneſs of the ſkin:
His awful preſence did the crowd ſurpriſe,
Nor durſt the raſh ſpectator meet his eyes;
Eyes that confeſs'd him born for kingly ſway,
So fierce, they flaſh'd intolerable day.
His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,
And juſt began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he ſpoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a ſilver ſound.
A laurel wreath'd his temples, freſh and green;
And myrtle-ſprigs, the marks of love, were mix'd between.
Upon his fiſt he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaim'd, and lily-white.
His hundred Knights attend him to the war,
All arm'd for battle; ſave their heads were bare.
Words and devices blaz'd on ev'ry ſhield,
And pleaſing was the terror of the field.

For

For kings, and dukes, and barons you might ſee,
Like ſparkling ſtars, though diff'rent in degree,
All for th' increaſe of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,
And beaſts in gambols friſk'd before their honeſt god.
In this array the war of either ſide
Through Athens paſs'd with military pride.
At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn;
Rich tap'ſtry ſpread the ſtreets, and flow'rs the pots adorn.
The town was all a jubilee of feaſts;
So Theſeus will'd, in honour of his gueſts;
Himſelf with open arms the king embrac'd,
Then all the reſt in their degrees were grac'd.
No harbinger was needful for the night,
For ev'ry houſe was proud to lodge a knight.
I paſs the royal treat, nor muſt relate
The gifts beſtow'd, nor how the champions ſate;
Who firſt, who laſt, or how the knights addreſs'd
Their vows, or who was faireſt at the feaſt;
Whoſe voice, whoſe graceful dance did moſt ſurpriſe,
Soft am'rous ſighs, and ſilent love of eyes.

The rivals call my muſe another way,
To ſing their vigils for th' enſuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkneſs, paſt the noon of night;
And Phoſphor, on the confines of the light,
Promis'd the ſun, ere day began to ſpring;
The tuneful lark already ſtretch'd her wing,
And, flick'ring on her neſt, made ſhort eſſays to ſing;
When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took to the royal liſts his early way,
To Venus, at her fane, in her own houſe, to pray.
There, falling on his knees before her ſhrine,
He thus implor'd with pray'rs her pow'r divine:
'Creator Venus, genial pow'r of love,
'The bliſs of men below, and gods above,
'Beneath the ſliding ſun thou runn'ſt thy race,
'Doſt faireſt ſhine, and beſt become thy place.
'For thee the winds their eaſtern blaſts forbear,
'Thy month reveals the ſpring, and opens all the year.
'Thee, Goddeſs, thee the ſtorms of winter fly,
'Earth ſmiles with flow'rs renewing; laughs the ſky,
'And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.
'For thee the lion loaths the taſte of blood,
'And roaring hunts his female through the wood:
'For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
'And tempt the ſtream, and ſnuff their abſent loves.

'Tis

'Thy name, whate'er a pleasure, gold, or fame:
'All nature is thy province, Jove thy care;
'Thou mak'st the world, and doth the world repair.
'Thou goddess of the mother of Cupid,
'Increase of love, compassion of the fad;
'If ever I sought thy temples more,
'Have pity, Goddess, for thou know'st the cause.
'Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
'To vent my sorrow would be some relief;
'Light fills my sight, gives me leisure to complain;
'We grieve, but cannot speak, in greater pain.
'O Goddess, tell my mind what I would say,
'Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.
'So grant my suit, as I enforce my might,
'In love to be thy champion and my knight;
'A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,
'A foe profest to barren chastity.
'Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,
'Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield:
'In my divine kindness make me blest,
'Let fate, or partial chance, dispose the rest:
'Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
'Possession, more than conquest, is my care.
'Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies,
'On whom he favours to confer the prize;

'With ſmiling aſpect you ſerenely move
'In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
'The Fates but only ſpin the coarſer clue,
'The fineſt of the wool is left for you.
'Spare me but one ſmall portion of the twine,
'And let the ſiſters cut below your line:
'The reſt among the rubbiſh may they ſweep,
'Or add it to the yarn of ſome old miſer's heap.
'But if you this ambitious pray'r deny,
'(A wiſh, I grant, beyond mortality)
'Then let me ſink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
'And, I once dead, let him poſſeſs her charms.'
Thus ended he; then, with obſervance due,
The ſacred incenſe on her altar threw:
The curling ſmoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious goddeſs gave the ſign,
Her ſtatue ſhook, and trembled all the ſhrine:
Pleas'd Palamon the tardy omen took:
For, ſince the flames purſu'd the trailing ſmoke,
He knew his boon was granted; but the day
To diſtance driv'n, and joy adjourn'd with long delay.
Now morn with roſy light had ſtreak'd the ſky,
Up roſe the ſun, and up roſe Emily;

Addreſs'd

Addreſs'd her early ſteps to Cynthia's fane,
In ſtate attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the veſts that holy rites require,
Incenſe, and od'rous gums, and cover'd fire,
The plenteous horns with pleaſant mead they crown,
Nor wanted aught beſides in honour of the moon.
Now while the temple ſmok'd with hallow'd ſteam,
They waſh the virgin in a living ſtream;
The ſecret ceremonies I conceal;
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful to reveal:
But ſuch they were as pagan uſe requir'd,
Perform'd by women when the men retir'd,
Whoſe eyes profane their chaſte myſterious rites
Might turn to ſcandal, or obſcene delights.
Well-meaners think no harm; but for the reſt,
Things ſacred they pervert, and ſilence is the beſt.
Her ſhining hair, uncomb'd, was looſely ſpread,
A crown of maſtleſs oak adorn'd her head:
When to the ſhrine approach'd, the ſpotleſs maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid:
(The rites were ſuch as were obſerv'd of old,
By Statius in his Theban ſtory told.)
Then kneeling, with her hand acroſs her breaſt,
Thus ſlowly ſhe preferr'd her chaſte requeſt:

'O Goddeſs,

'O Goddeſs, haunter of the woodland green,
'To whom both heav'n and earth and ſeas are ſeen;
'Queen of the nether ſkies, where half the year
'Thy ſilver beams deſcend, and light the gloomy ſphere;
'Goddeſs of maids, and conſcious of our hearts,
'So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,
'Which Niobe's devoted iſſue felt,
'When hiſſing through the ſkies the feather'd deaths were dealt:
'As I deſire to live a virgin-life,
'Nor know the name of mother, or of wife.
'Thy votreſs from my tender years I am,
'And love, like thee, the woods and ſylvan game.
'Like death, thou know'ſt, I loath the nuptial ſtate,
'And man, the tyrant of our ſex, I hate,
'A lowly ſervant, but a lofty mate.
'Where love is duty, on the female ſide:
'Or theirs mere ſenſual guſt, and fought with ſurly pride.
'Now by thy triple ſhape, as thou art ſeen
'In heav'n, earth, hell, and ev'ry where a queen,
'Grant this my firſt deſire; let diſcord ceaſe,
'And make betwixt the rivals laſting peace:

'Quench

'Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
'The flame, and turn it on ſome other love.
'Or if my frowning ſtars have ſo decreed,
'That one may be rejected, one ſucceed,
'Make him my lord, within whoſe faithful breaſt
'Is fixt my image, and who loves me beſt.
'But, oh! ev'n that avert! I chooſe it not,
'But take it as the leaſt unhappy lot.
'A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
'Oh, let me ſtill that ſpotleſs name retain!
'Frequent the foreſts, thy chaſte will obey,
'And only make the beaſts of chaſe my prey!'
The flames aſcend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameleſs maid addreſs'd her pray'r.
When lo! the burning fire, that ſhone ſo bright,
Flew off, all ſudden, with extinguiſh'd light,
And left one altar dark, a little ſpace;
Which turn'd ſelf-kindled, and renew'd the blaze:
The other victor-flame a moment ſtood,
Then fell, and lifeleſs left th' extinguiſh'd wood:
For ever loſt, th' irrevocable light
Forſook the black'ning coals, and ſunk to night:
At either end it whiſtled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, ſo dropp'd the dew;
Infected as it fell with ſweat of ſanguine hue.

The

The maid from that ill omen turn'd her eyes,
And with loud ſhrieks and clamours rent the ſkies,
Nor knew what ſignify'd the boding ſign,
But found the pow'rs diſpleas'd, and fear'd the wrath divine.
Then ſhook the ſacred ſhrine, and ſudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple bright.
The pow'r, behold! the pow'r in glory ſhone,
By her bent bow, and her keen arrows known;
The reſt, a huntreſs iſſuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel ſpear ſhe ſtood;
Then gracious thus began: "Diſmiſs thy fear,
"And heav'n's unchang'd decrees attentive hear:
"More pow'rful gods have torn thee from my ſide,
"Unwilling to reſign, and doom'd a bride:
"The two contending Knights are weigh'd above;
"One Mars protects, and one the Queen of Love:
"But which the man, is in the Thund'rer's breaſt;
"This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee beſt.
"The fire that, once extinct, reviv'd again,
"Foreſhows the love allotted to remain.
"Farewel," ſhe ſaid, and vaniſh'd from the place;
The ſheaf of arrows ſhook and rattled in the caſe.

Aghaſt

Aghaſt at this the royal virgin ſtood,
Diſclaim'd, and now no more a ſiſter of the wood;
But to the parting goddeſs thus ſhe pray'd:
'Propitious ſtill, be preſent to my aid,
'Nor quite abandon your once-favour'd maid.'
Then ſighing ſhe return'd; but ſmil'd betwixt,
With hopes and fears, and joy with ſorrow mixt.
The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who ſhar'd the heptarchy of pow'r,
His ſteps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
T' adore with pagan rites the pow'r armipotent:
Then proſtrate, low before his altar lay,
And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray:
"Strong God of Arms, whoſe iron ſcepter ſways
"The freezing North, and Hyperborean ſeas,
"And Scythian colds, and Thracia's wintry coaſt,
"Where ſtand thy ſteeds, and thou art honour'd moſt:
"There moſt; but ev'ry where thy pow'r is known,
"The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
"Terror is thine, and wild amazement flung
"From out thy chariot, withers ev'n the ſtrong:
"And diſarray and ſhameful rout enſue,
"And force is added to the fainting crew.
"Acknowledg'd as thou art, accept my pray'r,
"If aught I have atchiev'd deſerve thy care:

"I to

" If to my utmoſt pow'r with ſword and ſhield
" I dar'd the death, unknowing how to yield,
" And falling in my rank, ſtill kept the field:
" Then let my arms prevail, by thee ſuſtain'd,
" That Emily by conqueſt may be gain'd.
" Have pity on my pains; nor thoſe unknown
" To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.
" Venus, the public care of all above,
" Thy ſtubborn heart has ſoften'd into love:
" Now by her blandiſhments and powerful charms,
" When yielded ſhe lay curling in thy arms,
" Ev'n by thy ſhame, if ſhame it may be call'd,
" When Vulcan had thee in his net inthrall'd;
" O envy'd ignominy! ſweet diſgrace!
" When ev'ry god that ſaw thee, wiſh'd thy place!
" By thoſe dear pleaſures, aid my arms in fight,
" And make me conquer in my patron's right:
" For I am young, a novice in the trade,
" The fool of Love, unpractis'd to perſuade;
" And want the ſoothing arts that catch the fair,
" But, caught myſelf, lie ſtruggling in the ſnare:
" And ſhe I love, or laughs at all my pain,
" Or knows her worth too well, and pays me with diſdain.

" For

" For ſure I am, unleſs I win in arms,
" To ſtand excluded from Emilia's charms:
" Nor can my ſtrength avail, unleſs by thee
" Endu'd with force, I gain the victory:
" Then for the fire which warm'd thy gen'rous heart,
" Pity thy ſubject's pains, and equal ſmart.
" So be the morrow's ſweat and labour mine,
" The palm and honour of the conqueſt thine:
" Then ſhall the war, and ſtern debate, and ſtrife
" Immortal, be the bus'neſs of my life;
" And in thy fane, the duſty ſpoils among,
" High on the burniſh'd roof my banner ſhall be hung,
" Rank'd with my champions bucklers, and below,
" With arms revers'd, th' atchievements of my foe:
" And while theſe limbs the vital ſpirit feeds,
" While day to night, and night to day ſucceeds,
" Thy ſmoaking altar ſhall be fat with food
" Of incenſe, and the grateful ſteam of blood;
" Burnt-off'rings morn and ev'ning ſhall be thine;
" And fires eternal in thy temple ſhine.
" The buſh of yellow beard, this length of hair,
" Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
" Guiltleſs of ſteel, and from the razor free,
" Shall fall, a plenteous crop, reſery'd for thee.

" So

" So may my arms with victory be bleſt,
" I aſk no more; let fate diſpoſe the reſt."
The champion ceas'd; there follow'd in the cloſe
A hollow groan, a murm'ring wind aroſe,
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring ſound, and harſhly rung:
The bolted gates flew open at the blaſt,
The ſtorm ruſh'd in, and Arcite ſtood aghaſt:
The flames were blown aſide, yet ſhone they bright,
Fann'd by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.
Then from the ground a ſcent began to riſe,
Sweet-ſmelling, as accepted ſacrifice:
This omen pleas'd, and as the flames aſpire,
With od'rous incenſe Arcite heaps the fire;
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or Heathen charms:
At length the nodding ſtatue claſh'd his arms;
And with a ſullen ſound and feeble cry,
Half ſunk, and half pronounc'd the word of victory.
For this, with ſoul devout, he thank'd the god,
And, of ſucceſs ſecure, return'd to his abode.
Theſe vows thus granted rais'd a ſtrife above,
Betwixt the God of War and Queen of Love.
She granting firſt, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.

Jove

Jove was for Venus; but he fear'd his wife,
And ſeem'd unwilling to decide the ſtrife;
Till Saturn from his leaden throne aroſe,
And found a way the diff'rence to compoſe:
Though ſparing of his grace, to miſchief bent,
He ſeldom does a good with good intent.
Wayward, but wiſe; by long experience taught,
To pleaſe both parties, for ill ends, he ſought:
For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be out-ridden, though out-run.
By Fortune he was now to Venus trin'd,
And with ſtern Mars in Capricorn was join'd:
Of him diſpoſing in his own abode,
He ſooth'd the goddeſs, while he gull'd the god:
'Ceaſe, daughter, to complain; and ſtint the ſtrife;
'Thy Palamon ſhall have his promis'd wife;
'And Mars, the lord of conqueſt, in the fight
'With palm and laurel ſhall adorn his knight.
'Wide is my courſe, nor turn I to my place,
'Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
'Man feels me, when I preſs th' ethereal plains,
'My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.
'Mine is the ſhipwreck, in a watery ſign;
'And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.

'Cold, ſhiv'ring agues, melancholy care,
'And bitter blaſting winds, and poiſon'd air,
'Are mine, and wilful death, reſulting from deſpair.
'The throttling quinſey 'tis my ſtar appoints,
'And rheumatiſms I ſend to rack the joints:
'When churls rebel againſt their native prince,
'I arm their hands, and furniſh the pretence;
'And houſing in the lion's hateful ſign,
'Bought ſenates and deſerting troops are mine:
'Mine is the privy pois'ning; I command
'Unkindly ſeaſons, and ungrateful land.
'By me kings' palaces are puſh'd to ground,
'And miners cruſh'd beneath their mines are found.
'Twas I ſlew Sampſon, when the pillar'd hall
'Fell down, and cruſh'd the many with the fall.
'My looking is the fire of peſtilence,
'That ſweeps at once the people and the prince.
'Now weep no more, but truſt my grandfire's art;
'Mars ſhall be pleas'd, and thou perform thy part.
''Tis ill, though diff'rent your complexions are,
'The family of heav'n for men ſhould war.'
Th' expedient pleas'd, where neither loſt his right:
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.
The management they left to Chronos' care;
Now turn we to th' effect, and ſing the war.

In

In Athens all was pleaſure, mirth and play,
All proper to the Spring, and ſprightly May;
Which ev'ry ſoul inſpir'd with ſuch delight,
'Twas juſting all the day, and love at night.
Heav'n ſmil'd, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world, as when it firſt began.
At length in ſleep their bodies they compoſe,
And dreamt the future fight, and early roſe.

Now ſcarce the dawning day began to ſpring,
As at a ſignal giv'n, the ſtreets with clamours ring:
At once the crowd aroſe; confus'd and high,
Ev'n from the heav'n was heard a ſhouting cry;
For Mars was early up, and rous'd the ſky.
The gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharp'ning their ſights, and leaning from their ſtars;
The neighing of the gen'rous horſe was heard,
For battle by the buſy groom prepar'd:
Ruſtling of harneſs, rattling of the ſhield,
Clatt'ring of armour, furbiſh'd for the field.
Crowds to the caſtle mounted up the ſtreet,
Batt'ring the pavement with their courſers' feet:
The greedy ſight might there devour the gold
Of glitt'ring arms, too dazzling to behold;
And poliſh'd ſteel, that caſt the view aſide,
And creſted morions, with their plumy pride.

Knights, with a long retinue of their ſquires,
In gaudy liv'ries march, and quaint attires.
One lac'd the helm, another held the lance;
A third the ſhining buckler did advance.
The courſer paw'd the ground with reſtleſs feet,
And ſnorting foam'd, and champ'd the golden bit.
The ſmiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their ſide,
And nails for looſen'd ſpears, and thongs for ſhields provide.
The yeomen guard the ſtreets, in ſeemly bands;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their hands.
The trumpets, next the gate, in order plac'd,
Attend the ſign to ſound the martial blaſt:
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides,
And the laſt comers bear the former to the ſides.
The throng is in the midſt: the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few;
In knots they ſtand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aſpect, earneſt in their talk:
Factious, and fav'ring this or t'other ſide,
As their ſtrong fancies and weak reaſon guide:
Their wagers back their wiſhes: numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:

So

So vig'rous are his eyes, ſuch rays they caſt,
So prominent his eagle's beak is plac'd.
But moſt their looks on the black monarch bend,
His riſing muſcles, and his brawn commend;
His double-biting ax, and beamy ſpear,
Each aſking a gigantic force to rear.
All ſpoke as partial favour mov'd the mind;
And, ſafe themſelves, at others coſt divin'd.
Wak'd by the cries, th' Athenian chief aroſe,
The knightly forms of combat to diſpoſe;
And paſſing through th' obſequious guards, he ſate
Conſpicuous on a throne, ſublime in ſtate;
There for the two contending Knights he ſent;
Arm'd cap-a-pee, with rev'rence low they bent:
He ſmil'd on both, and with ſuperior look
Alike their offer'd adoration took.
The people preſs on ev'ry ſide to ſee
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then ſigning to their heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty ſtand.
Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud
The king at arms beſpeaks the knights and liſt'ning crowd.
'Our ſovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind
'The means to ſpare the blood of gentle kind;

'And of his grace and in-born clemency,
'He modifies his firſt ſevere decree;
'The keener edge of battle to rebate,
'The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
'He wills, not death ſhould terminate their ſtrife;
'And wounds, if wounds enſue, be ſhort of life.
'But iſſues, ere the fight, his dread command,
'That ſlings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
'Be baniſh'd from the field; that none ſhall dare
'With ſhort'ned ſword to ſtab in cloſer war;
'But in fair combat fight with manly ſtrength,
'Nor puſh with biting point, but ſtrike at length.
'The tourney is allow'd but one career,
'Of the tough aſh, with the ſharp-grinded ſpear.
'But knights unhors'd may riſe from off the plain,
'And fight on foot, their honour to regain.
'Nor, if at miſchief taken, on the ground
'Be ſlain, but pris'ners to the pillar bound,
'At either barrier plac'd; nor, captives made,
'Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.
'The chief of either ſide, bereft of life,
'Or yielded to his foe, concludes the ſtrife.
'Thus dooms the lord: now valiant knights and young,
'Fight each his fill with ſwords and maces long.'

The

The herald ends: the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims and vaſt applauſe is rent:
"Heav'n guard a prince ſo gracious and ſo good,
"So juſt, and yet ſo provident of blood!"
This was the gen'ral cry. The trumpets ſound,
And warlike ſymphony is heard around.
The marching troops through Athens take their way,
The great earl-marſhal orders their array.
The fair from high the paſſing pomp behold;
A rain of flow'rs is from the windows roll'd.
The caſements are with golden tiſſue ſpread,
And horſes hoofs, for earth, on ſilken tap'ſtry tread.
The king goes midmoſt, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and cloſe is either ſide.
Next after theſe, there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cauſe and the reward of ſtrife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marſhal'd in degree.
Thus through the ſouthern gate they take their way,
And at the liſts arriv'd ere prime of day.
There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And, wheeling eaſt and weſt, before their many ride;
Th' Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the Queen and Emily:

Next theſe, the kindred of the crown are grac'd
With nearer ſeats, and lords by ladies plac'd.
Scarce were they ſeated, when with clamours loud
In ruſh'd at once a rude promiſcuous crowd:
The guards, and then each other overbear,
And in a moment throng the ſpacious theatre.
Now chang'd the jarring noiſe to whiſpers low,
As winds forſaking ſeas more ſoftly blow;
When at the weſtern gate, on which the car
Is plac'd aloft, that bears the God of War,
Proud Arcite ent'ring arm'd before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and diſplay'd abroad
The bloody colours of his patron god.
At that ſelf moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the riſing ſun;
Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and ſhares the people's eyes.
From eaſt to weſt, look all the world around,
Two troops ſo match'd were never to be found;
Such bodies built for ſtrength, of equal age,
In ſtature ſiz'd; ſo proud an equipage:
The niceſt eye could no diſtinction make,
Where lay th' advantage, or what ſide to take.

Thus

Thus rang'd, the herald for the laſt proclaims
A ſilence, while they anſwer'd to their names:
For ſo the king decreed, to ſhun with care
The fraud of muſters falſe, the common bane of war.
The tale was juſt; and then the gates were clos'd;
And chief to chief, and troop to troop oppos'd.
The heralds laſt retir'd, and loudly cry'd,
"The fortune of the field be fairly try'd."
At this, the challenger with fierce defy
His trumpet ſounds; the challeng'd makes reply,
With clangor rings the field, reſounds the vaulted ſky.
Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the reſt,
Or at the helmet pointed, or the creſt;
They vaniſh from the barrier, ſpeed the race,
And ſpurring ſee decreaſe the middle ſpace.
A cloud of ſmoke envelops either hoſt,
And all at once the combatants are loſt:
Darkling they join adverſe, and ſhock unſeen,
Courſers with courſers juſtling, men with men:
As lab'ring in eclipſe, a while they ſtay,
Till the next blaſt of wind reſtores the day.
They look anew: the beauteous form of fight
Is chang'd, and war appears a grizly ſight.

Two

Two troops in fair array one moment ſhow'd;
The next, a field with fallen bodies ſtrow'd:
Not half the number in their ſeats are found;
But men and ſteeds lie grov'ling on the ground.
The points of ſpears are ſtuck within the ſhield,
The ſteeds without their riders ſcour the field.
The knights unhors'd, on foot renew the fight;
The glitt'ring fauchions caſt a gleaming light;
Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound;
Out ſpins the ſtreaming blood, and dyes the ground.
The mighty maces with ſuch haſte deſcend,
They break the bones, and make the ſolid armour bend.
This thruſts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes at once the horſeman and the horſe:
That courſer ſtumbles on the fallen ſteed,
And ſlound'ring, throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a foot-ball to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this diſabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound;
Where by the king's award he muſt abide:
There goes a captive led on t'other ſide.
By fits they ceaſe; and leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.

Full

Full oft the rivals met, and neither ſpar'd
His utmoſt force, and each forgot to ward.
The head of this was to the ſaddle bent,
That other backward to the crupper ſent:
Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they cloſe.
So deep their fauchions bite, that ev'ry ſtroke
Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far aſunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and ſteel they meet again.
So when a tiger ſucks a bullock's blood,
A famiſh'd lion iſſuing from the wood
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.
Each claims poſſeſſion, neither will obey,
But both their paws are faſten'd on the prey:
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they ſtrive,
The ſwains come arm'd between, and both to diſtance drive.
At length, as fate fore-doom'd, and all things tend
By courſe of time to their appointed end;
So when the ſun to weſt was far declin'd,
And both afreſh in mortal battle join'd,
The ſtrong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:

For

For turning ſhort, he ſtruck with all his might
Full on the helmet of th' unwary Knight.
Deep was the wound; he ſtagger'd with the blow,
And turn'd him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with ſuch force he ſtruck, he fell'd him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight,
Twice ten at once ſurround the ſingle Knight:
O'erpower'd at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.
Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd
No more to try the fortune of the field!
And, worſe than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conqueſt, and renounce the prize!
The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd,
Who had beheld the fight from firſt to laſt,
Bade ceaſe the war; pronouncing from on high,
"Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily."
The ſound of trumpets to the voice reply'd,
And round the royal liſts the heralds cry'd,
"Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride."

The

The people rend the ſkies with vaſt applauſe;
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cauſe.
Arcite is own'd ev'n by the gods above,
And conqu'ring Mars inſults the Queen of Love.
So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,
And Jove's uſurping arms in heav'n prevail'd.
Laugh'd all the pow'rs who favour tyranny;
And all the ſtanding army of the ſky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And weeping on the liſts diſtill'd her tears;
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman moſt,
And, in her champion foil'd, the cauſe of love is loſt.
Till Saturn ſaid, "Fair daughter, now be ſtill,
"The bluſt'ring fool has ſatisfy'd his will:
"His boon is giv'n; his Knight has gain'd the day,
"But loſt the prize; th' arrears are yet to pay.
"Thy hour is come, and mine the care ſhall be
"To pleaſe thy Knight, and ſet thy promiſe free."
Now while the heralds run the liſts around,
And Arcite, Arcite, heav'n and earth reſound;
A miracle (nor leſs it could be call'd)
Their joy with unexpected ſorrow pall'd.
The victor Knight had laid his helm aſide,
Part for his eaſe, the greater part for pride:

Bare-

Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,
And paid the ſalutations of the crowd:
Then, ſpurring at full ſpeed, ran endlong on
Where Theſeus ſate on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward caſt his eye,
Where next the Queen was plac'd his Emily:
Then paſſing, to the ſaddle-bow he bent;
A ſweet regard the gracious virgin lent:
(For women, to the brave an eaſy prey,
Still follow fortune, where ſhe leads the way:)
Juſt then, from earth ſprung out a flaſhing fire,
By Pluto ſent, at Saturn's bad deſire.
The ſtartling ſteed was ſeiz'd with ſudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pummel caſt the Knight:
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his count'nance in a little ſpace,
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.
Help was at hand; they rear'd him from the ground,
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath;
It came, but clogg'd with ſymptoms of his death.
The ſaddle-bow the noble parts had preſt,
All bruis'd and mortify'd his manly breaſt.

Him

Him ſtill entranc'd, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd.
At length he wak'd, and with a feeble cry,
The word he firſt pronounc'd was, Emily.
Mean time the King, though inwardly he mourn'd,
In pomp triumphant to the town return'd,
Attended by the chiefs, who fought the field;
(Now friendly mix'd, and in one troop compell'd)
Compos'd his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior train,
Though moſt were ſorely wounded, none were ſlain.
The ſurgeons ſoon deſpoil'd them of their arms,
And ſome with ſalves they cure, and ſome with charms;
Foment the bruiſes, and the pains aſſuage,
And heal their inward hurts with ſov'reign draughts of ſage.
The King in perſon viſits all around,
Comforts the ſick, congratulates the ſound;
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the reſt,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feaſt.
None was diſgrac'd; for falling is no ſhame;
And cowardice alone is loſs of fame.

The

The vent'rous knight is from the ſaddle thrown;
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own.
If crowns and palms the conqu'ring ſide adorn,
The victor under better ſtars was born:
The brave man ſeeks not popular applauſe,
Nor overpower'd with arms deſerts his cauſe;
Unſham'd, though foil'd, he does the beſt he can;
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.
Thus Theſeus ſmil'd on all with equal grace,
And each was ſet according to his place.
With eaſe were reconcil'd the diff'ring parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.
At length they took their leave, the time expir'd;
Well pleas'd; and to their ſev'ral homes retir'd.
Mean while the health of Arcite ſtill impairs;
From bad proceeds to worſe, and mocks the leeches cares:
Swoln is his breaſt; his inward pains increaſe;
All means are us'd, and all without ſucceſs.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in ſpite of art:
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail:
The mold of nature's fabrick is deſtroy'd,
Her veſſels diſcompos'd, her virtue void:

The

The bellows of his lungs begin to ſwell;
All out of frame is ev'ry ſecret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Thoſe breathing organs thus within oppreſt,
With venom ſoon diſtend the ſinews of his breaſt.
Nought profits him to ſave abandon'd life,
Nor vomits upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmoſt region batter'd and deſtroy'd,
When nature cannot work, th' effect of art is void.
For phyſic can but mend our crazy ſtate,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doom'd to die in all his pride,
Muſt leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gain'd hardly, againſt right, and unenjoy'd.
When 'twas declar'd all hope of life was paſt,
Conſcience (that of all phyſic works the laſt)
Caus'd him to ſend for Emily in haſte.
With her, at his deſire, came Palamon;
Then, on his pillow rais'd, he thus begun.
"No language can expreſs the ſmalleſt part
"Of what I feel, and ſuffer in my heart,
"For you, whom beſt I love and value moſt;
"But to your ſervice I bequeath my ghoſt;
"Which from this mortal body when unty'd,
"Unſeen, unheard, ſhall hover at your ſide;

" Nor fright you waking, nor your ſleep offend,
" But wait officious, and your ſteps attend:
" How I have lov'd, excuſe my falt'ring tongue,
" My ſpirits feeble, and my pains are ſtrong:
" This I may ſay, I only grieve to die,
" Becauſe I loſe my charming Emily:
" To die, when Heav'n had put you in my pow'r,
" Fate could not chooſe a more malicious hour.
" What greater curſe could envious fortune give,
" Than juſt to die, when I began to live?
" Vain men! how vaniſhing a bliſs we crave,
" Now warm in love, now with'ring in the grave!
" Never, O never more to ſee the ſun!
" Still dark, in a damp vault, and ſtill alone!
" This fate is common; but I loſe my breath
" Near bliſs, and not yet bleſs'd before my death.
" Farewel; but take me dying in your arms,
" 'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
" This hand I cannot but in death reſign;
" Ah, could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
" I feel my end approach, and thus embrac'd,
" Am pleas'd to die:—but hear me ſpeak my laſt.
" Ah! my ſweet foe, for you, and you alone,
" I broke my faith with injur'd Palamon.

" But

" But love the ſenſe of right and wrong confounds,
" Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
" And much I doubt, ſhould heav'n my life prolong,
" I ſhould return to juſtify my wrong:
" For while my former flames remain within,
" Repentance is but want of pow'r to ſin.
" With mortal hatred I purſu'd his life,
" Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the ſtrife;
" Nor I, but as I lov'd: yet all combin'd,
" Your beauty, and my impotence of mind;
" And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire;
" For ſtill our kindred ſouls had one deſire.
" He had a moment's right in point of time;
" Had I ſeen firſt, then his had been the crime.
" Fate made it mine, and juſtify'd his right;
" Nor holds this earth a more deſerving knight,
" For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
" Truth, honour, all that is compris'd in good;
" So help me heav'n, in all the world is none
" So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon.
" He loves you too, with ſuch a holy fire,
" As will not, cannot but with life expire:
" Our vow'd affections both have often try'd,
" Nor any love but yours could ours divide.

" Then by my love's inviolable band,
" By my long ſuff'ring, and my ſhort command,
" If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
" Have pity on the faithful Palamon."
This was his laſt; for death came on amain,
And exercis'd below his iron reign;
Then upward to the ſeat of life he goes;
Senſe fled before him, what he touch'd he froze:
Yet could he not his cloſing eyes withdraw,
Though leſs and leſs of Emily he ſaw:
So ſpeechleſs for a little ſpace he lay;
Then graſp'd the hand he held, and ſigh'd his ſoul away.
But whither went his ſoul, let ſuch relate
Who ſearch the ſecrets of the future ſtate:
Divines can ſay but what themſelves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonſtrative:
For, were all plain, then all ſides muſt agree,
And faith itſelf be loſt in certainty.
To live uprightly then is ſure the beſt,
To ſave ourſelves, and not to damn the reſt.
The ſoul of Arcite went, where Heathens go,
Who better live than we, though leſs they know.
In Palamon, a manly grief appears;
Silent, he wept, aſham'd to ſhow his tears:

Emilia

Emilia ſhriek'd but once, and then, oppreſs'd
With ſorrow, ſunk upon her lover's breaſt:
Till Theſeus in his arms convey'd with care,
Far from ſo ſad a ſight, the ſwooning fair.
'Twere loſs of time her ſorrow to relate;
Ill bears the ſex a youthful lover's fate,
When juſt approaching to the nuptial ſtate.
But like a low hung cloud, it rains ſo faſt,
That all at once it falls, and cannot laſt.
The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now,
That laugh'd ſo late, becomes the ſcene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both ſexes, ev'ry ſtate,
With tears lament the Knight's untimely fate.
Not greater grief in falling Troy was ſeen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with duſt deform'd their hoary hair,
The women beat their breaſts, their cheeks they tare.
"Why would'ſt thou go, with one conſent they cry,
"When thou hadſt gold enough, and Emily!"
Theſeus himſelf, who ſhould have cheer'd the grief
Of others, wanted now the ſame relief.
Old Egeus only could revive his ſon,
Who various changes of the world had known;
And ſtrange viciſſitudes of human fate,
Still alt'ring, never in a ſteady ſtate:

Good after ill, and after pain delight;
Alternate, like the ſcenes of day and night:
'Since ev'ry man who lives, is born to die,
'And none can boaſt ſincere felicity,
'With equal mind what happens let us bear,
'Nor joy, nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.
'Like pilgrims, to th' appointed place we tend;
'The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
'Ev'n kings but play; and when their part is done,
'Some other, worſe or better, mount the throne.'
With words like theſe the crowd was ſatisfy'd,
And ſo they would have been, had Theſeus dy'd.
But he, their King, was lab'ring in his mind
A fitting place for funeral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead deſign'd.
And after long debate, at laſt he found
(As love itſelf had mark'd the ſpot of ground)
That grove for ever green, that conſcious land,
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand:
That where he fed his amorous deſires
With ſoft complaints, and felt his hotteſt fires,
There other flames might waſte his earthly part,
And burn his limbs, where love had burn'd his heart.

This

This once reſolv'd, the peaſants were enjoin'd
Sere-wood, and firs, and dodder'd oaks to find.
With ſounding axes to the grove they go,
Fell, ſplit, and lay the fuel on a row,
Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepar'd,
On which the lifeleſs body ſhould be rear'd,
Cover'd with cloth of gold, on which was laid
The corpſe of Arcite, in like robes array'd.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mix'd with myrtle, ſpread.
A ſword keen-edg'd within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquer'd field:
Bare was his manly viſage on the bier:
Menac'd his count'nance; ev'n in death ſevere.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,
To lie in ſolemn ſtate, a public ſight.
Groans, cries, and howlings fill the crowded place,
And unaffected ſorrow ſat on ev'ry face.
Sad Palamon above the reſt appears,
In ſable garments, dew'd with guſhing tears:
His auburn locks on either ſhoulder flow'd,
Which to the funeral of his friend he vow'd:
But Emily, as chief, was next his ſide,
A virgin-widow and a mourning bride.

And that the princely obſequies might be
Perform'd according to his high degree,
The ſteed that bore him living to the fight,
Was trapp'd with poliſh'd ſteel, all ſhining bright,
And cover'd with th' atchievements of the Knight.
The riders rode abreaſt, and one his ſhield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow, and, glorious to be behold,
The coſtly quiver, all of burniſh'd gold.
The nobleſt of the Grecians next appear,
And, weeping, on their ſhoulders bore the bier;
With ſober pace they march'd, and often ſtaid,
And through the maſter-ſtreet the corpſe convey'd.
The houſes to their tops with black were ſpread,
And ev'n the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right ſide of the pall old Egeus kept,
And on the left the royal Theſeus wept;
Each bore a golden bowl of work divine,
With honey fill'd, and milk, and mix'd with ruddy wine.
Then Palamon, the kinſman of the ſlain,
And after him appear'd th' illuſtrious train.
To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,
With cover'd fire, the funeral pile to light.

With

With high devotion was the ſervice made,
And all the rites of pagan honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, muſt ſend the ſhaft below.
The bottom was full twenty fathom broad,
With crackling ſtraw beneath in due proportion ſtrow'd.
The fabrick ſeem'd a wood of riſing green,
With ſulphur and bitumen caſt between,
To feed the flames: the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain-aſh, the mother of the ſpear;
The mourner-yew, and builder oak were there:
The beech, the ſwimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a ſofter grain,
And laurels, which the gods for conqu'ring chiefs ordain.
How they were rank'd, ſhall reſt untold by me,
With nameleſs nymphs that liv'd in ev'ry tree;
Nor how the dryads, and the woodland train,
Diſherited, ran howling o'er the plain:
Nor how the birds to foreign ſeats repair'd,
Or beaſts, that bolted out, and ſaw the foreſt bar'd:
Nor how the ground, now clear'd, with ghaſtly fright
Beheld the ſudden ſun, a ſtranger to the light.

The

The ſtraw, as firſt I ſaid, was laid below;
Of chips and fere-wood was the ſecond row;
The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd;
The fourth high ſtage the fragrant odours held,
And pearls and precious ſtones, and rich array;
In midſt of which, embalm'd, the body lay.
The ſervice ſung, the maid with mourning eyes
The ſtubble fir'd; the ſmould'ring flames ariſe:
This office done, ſhe ſunk upon the ground;
But what ſhe ſpoke, recover'd from her ſwoon,
I want the wit in moving words to dreſs;
But by themſelves the tender ſex may gueſs.
While the devouring fire was burning faſt,
Rich jewels in the flames the wealthy caſt;
And ſome their ſhields, and ſome their lances threw,
And gave their warrior's ghoſt a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood,
Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood,
And hiſſing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted ſquadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice reſound:
Hail, and farewel, they ſhouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again:

Still

Still as they turn'd, they beat their clatt'ring ſhields;
The women mix their cries; and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continued all the night,
And funeral games were play'd at new returning light:
Who naked wreſtled beſt, beſmear'd with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor would you attend;
But briefly haſte to my long ſtory's end.

I paſs the reſt; the year was fully mourn'd,
And Palamon long ſince to Thebes return'd;
When, by the Grecians' general conſent,
At Athens Theſeus held his parliament:
Among the laws that paſs'd, it was decreed,
That conquer'd Thebes from bondage ſhould be freed;
Reſerving homage to th' Athenian throne,
To which the ſov'reign ſummon'd Palamon.
Unknowing of the cauſe, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and ſtill in black array.

The monarch mounts the throne, and, plac'd on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily:
So call'd, ſhe came; the ſenate roſe, and paid
Becoming rev'rence to the royal maid.
And firſt ſoft whiſpers through th' aſſembly went:
With ſilent wonder then they watch'd th' event:

All

All huſh'd, the King aroſe with awful grace,
Deep thought was in his breaſt, and counſel in his face.
At length he ſigh'd; and, having firſt prepar'd
Th' attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.
'The cauſe and ſpring of motion, from above,
'Hung down on earth the golden chain of love:
'Great was th' effect, and high was his intent,
'When peace among the jarring ſeeds he ſent.
'Fire, flood, and earth, and air by this were bound,
'And love, the common link, the new creation crown'd.
'The chain ſtill holds; for though the forms decay,
'Eternal matter never wears away:
'The ſame firſt mover certain bounds has plac'd,
'How long thoſe periſhable forms ſhall laſt;
'Nor can they laſt beyond the time aſſign'd
'By that all-ſeeing and all-making mind:
'Shorten their hours they may; for will is free;
'But never paſs th' appointed deſtiny.
'So men oppreſs'd, when weary of their breath,
'Throw off the burden, and ſuborn their death.
'Then ſince thoſe forms begin, and have their end,
'On ſome unalter'd cauſe they ſure depend:
'Parts of the whole are we; but God the whole;
'Who gives us life and animating ſoul.

'For

'For nature cannot from a part derive
'That being, which the whole can only give:
'He perfect, ſtable; but imperfect we,
'Subject to change, and diff'rent in degree.
'Plants, beaſts, and man; and, as our organs are,
'We more or leſs of his perfection ſhare.
'But by a long deſcent, th' ethereal fire
'Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire:
'As he withdraws his virtue, ſo they paſs,
'And the ſame matter makes another maſs:
'This law th' omniſcient pow'r was pleas'd to give,
'That ev'ry kind ſhould by ſucceſſion live:
'That individuals die, his will ordains;
'The propagated ſpecies ſtill remains.
'The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
'Shoots riſing up, and ſpreads by ſlow degrees:
'Three centuries he grows, and three he ſtays
'Supreme in ſtate, and in three more decays:
'So wears the paving pebble in the ſtreet,
'And towns and tow'rs their fatal periods meet;
'So rivers rapid once, now naked lie,
'Forſaken of their ſprings, and leave their channels dry.
'So man, at firſt a drop, dilates with heat,
'Then form'd, the little heart begins to beat;

'Secret

'Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell;
'At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the ſhell,
'And ſtruggles into breath, and cries for aid;
'Then, helpleſs, in his mother's lap is laid.
'He creeps, he walks, and, iſſuing into man,
'Grudges their life, from whence his own began:
'Retchleſs of laws, affects to rule alone,
'Anxious to reign, and reſtleſs on the throne:
'Firſt vegetive, then feels, and reaſons laſt;
'Rich of three ſouls, and lives all three to waſte.
'Some thus; but thouſands more in flow'r of age,
'For few arrive to run the latter ſtage.
'Sunk in the firſt, in battle ſome are ſlain,
'And others whelm'd beneath the ſtormy main.
'What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
'At whoſe command we periſh, and we ſpring?
'Then 'tis our beſt, ſince thus ordain'd to die,
'To make a virtue of neceſſity.
'Take what he gives, ſince to rebel is vain;
'The bad grows better, which we well ſuſtain;
'And could we chooſe the time, and chooſe aright,
''Tis beſt to die, our honour at the height.
'When we have done our anceſtors no ſhame,
'But ſerv'd our friends, and well ſecur'd our fame;

'Then

'Then ſhould we wiſh our happy life to cloſe,
'And leave no more for fortune to diſpoſe:
'So ſhould we make our death a glad relief
'From future ſhame, from ſickneſs, and from grief.
'Enjoying while we live the preſent hour,
'And dying in our excellence and flow'r.
'Then round our death-bed ev'ry friend ſhould run,
'And joyous of our conqueſt early won:
'While the malicious world with envious tears
'Should grudge our happy end, and wiſh it theirs.
'Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,
'Why ſhould we mourn, that he ſo ſoon is freed,
'Or call untimely, what the gods decreed?
'With grief as juſt, a friend may be deplor'd,
'From foul priſon to free air reſtor'd.
'Ought he to thank his kinſman, or his wife,
'Could tears recall him into wretched life?
'Their ſorrow hurts themſelves; on him is loſt;
'And, worſe than both, offends his happy ghoſt.
'What then remains, but, after paſt annoy,
'To take the good viciſſitude of joy?
'To thank the gracious gods for what they give,
'Poſſeſs our ſouls, and while we live, to live?
'Ordain we then two ſorrows to combine,
'And in one point th' extremes of grief to join;

'That

'That thence reſulting joy may be renew'd,
'As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
'Then I propoſe that Palamon ſhall be
'In marriage join'd with beauteous Emily;
'For which already I have gain'd th' aſſent
'Of my free people in full parliament.
'Long love to her has borne the faithful Knight,
'And well deſerv'd, had fortune done him right:
''Tis time to mend her fault; ſince Emily,
'By Arcite's death, from former vows is free.
'If you, fair ſiſter, ratify th' accord,
'And take him for your huſband, and your lord,
''Tis no diſhonour to confer your grace
'On one deſcended from a royal race:
'And, were he leſs, yet years of ſervice paſt
'From grateful ſouls exact reward at laſt:
'Pity is heav'n's and yours: nor can ſhe find
'A throne ſo ſoft as in a woman's mind.'

He ſaid; ſhe bluſh'd; and, as o'er-aw'd by might,
Seem'd to give Theſeus what ſhe gave the Knight.
Then, turning to the Theban, thus he ſaid;
'Small arguments are needful to perſuade
'Your temper to comply with my command;'
And ſpeaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.

Smil'd

Smil'd Venus, to behold her own true Knight
Obtain the conqueſt, though he loſt the fight;
And bleſs'd with nuptial bliſs the ſweet laborious night.

Eros, and Anteros, on either ſide,
One fir'd the bridegroom, and one warm'd the bride;
And long-attending Hymen from above
Show'r'd on the bed the whole Idalian grove.
All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day diſcolour'd with domeſtic ſtrife;
No jealouſy, but mutual truth believ'd,
Secure repoſe, and kindneſs undeceiv'd.
Thus Heav'n, beyond the compaſs of his thought,
Sent him the bleſſing he ſo dearly bought.
So may the Queen of Love long duty bleſs,
And all true lovers find the ſame ſucceſs.

END OF VOL. I.

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